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Community Relations in Superfund
A Handbook (Interim Version)

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16. ABSTRACT

The purpose of the handbook is to provide (1) policy requirements for coordinating community regulations activities at Superfund sites and (2) additional techniques and guidance that can be used to supplement and enhance the basic requirements for community relations. As such, the present handbook is a thorough revision of an interim version issued in September 1983. New material has been added, and existing material has been rewritten to incorporate new public participation requirements of SARA, and EPA policies issued since 1983. The overall aim has been to reflect additional years of experience in conducting community relations activities at Superfund sites throughout the nation. While this experience has confirmed the value of the Superfund community relations program, it also has provided considerable insight, often based on trial-and-error, about which approaches and activities are more useful, and which may be less so. This handbook incorporates these lessons of experience.

Community relations is a team effort, involving the collaboration of technical staff and enforcement staff, as well as staff with special expertise in community relations or public affairs. Therefore, this handbook is intended for a broad audience of all those individuals involved in any way in community relations activities.

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PREFACE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing this handbook as policy and guidance for community relations in the Superfund program. It is applicable to all response actions conducted under authority of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA), whether conducted by EPA, other Federal agencies, or State governments. The objective of community relations efforts is to involve the public in activities and decisions made about Superfund sites where past activities have led to hazardous release problems. EPA also has developed a public involvement program for community residents living near facilities that currently treat, store, or dispose hazardous wastes, and are therefore regulated under Subtitle C of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976. These two programs -- Superfund community relations and RCRA public involvement -- share similar objectives in keeping communities informed about and involved in hazardous waste issues.

The purpose of the handbook is to provide (1) policy requirements for coordinating community relations activities at Superfund sites and (2) additional techniques and guidance that can be used to supplement and enhance the basic requirements for community relations. As such, the present handbook is a thorough revision of an interim version issued in September 1983. New material has been added, and existing material has been rewritten to incorporate new public participation requirements of SARA, and EPA policies issued since 1983. The overall aim has been to reflect additional years of experience in conducting community relations activities at Superfund sites throughout the nation. While this experience has confirmed the value of the Superfund community relations program, it also has provided considerable insight, often based on trial-and-error, about which approaches and activities are more useful, and which may be less so. This handbook incorporates these lessons of experience.

The handbook continues to emphasize two-way communication in the planning and implementation of community relations programs. This approach has consistently demonstrated the value of incorporating public input into the decision-making process. The handbook also stresses the importance of integration of technical, community relations, and legal staff in carrying out coordinated community relations activities.

In addition, since the September 1983 interim version of this handbook was issued, community relations efforts have increasingly become standard for EPA and State agencies responsible for Superfund actions. Regional and State staff committed to conducting effective community relations efforts are growing in number, and necessary resources are increasingly available. The primary emphasis of this revised handbook, therefore, is on practical guidance for planning and implementing community relations activities, with secondary emphasis on the rationale for such activities.

It is important to note this edition of the handbook, once again, is an interim version. New and additionally required public participation activities specified in SARA are included in this edition, but it does not include further guidance and policy expected to be promulgated in the revised National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) which is to be issued in mid-1988. Two chapters of this edition are reserved pending development of these policies. Also, this handbook is supplemented by EPA guidance on contract management for community relations, as well as by EPA policy and guidance on community relations during particular phases of Superfund response actions. Other guidance will be developed to supplement this handbook. In particular, guidance will be forthcoming on the technical assistance program and on community relations during removal actions.[1] EPA expects this interim edition of the handbook and supplemental guidance to be in effect until the Agency issues the final version of the handbook soon after the revised NCP is issued.

Although prepared by EPA, this handbook is intended to be equally useful to staff in other Federal agencies, as well as to staff in State agencies, who are responsible for implementing community relations programs during Superfund responses. The neutral term "agency" is used in this document to refer to either EPA, another Federal agency, or a State agency with lead responsibility for Superfund actions.

Community relations is a team effort, involving the collaboration of technical staff and enforcement staff, as well as staff with special expertise in community relations or public affairs. Therefore, this handbook is intended for a broad audience of all those individuals involved in any way in community relations activities. The term "staff" is used in this handbook as a neutral term to apply to anyone involved in a community relations program, not just staff whose sole or principal responsibility is to plan and administer community relations programs. One point stressed throughout this handbook is that **an effective community relations program requires the attention and commitment of everyone involved in a Superfund response, regardless of job title**. This requires that technical and enforcement staff familiarize themselves with community relations requirements and issues of community concern at a site while community relations staff understand the technical and legal issues at a site. This guidance can help to coordinate the contributions of staff throughout an agency and ensure an effective community relations program.

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[1] Chapter 6 is undergoing a revision. The revised chapter will be issued at a later date.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This handbook serves as guidance for conducting community relations activities in the Superfund program. It incorporates U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policy and guidance on community relations. Certain details of the handbook may be modified in the future to reflect experience and future additional guidance with a developing program. The handbook was prepared for the EPA, Office of Emergency and Remedial Response (OERR) and Office of Waste Programs Enforcement (OWPE) by ICF Incorporated, under EPA contract 68-01-7389.

Comments on drafts of this handbook were sought from the following:

- EPA Regional and Headquarters Superfund staff;
- State environmental agencies;
- Other Federal agencies;
- Environmental groups;
- Government associations; and
- Industry representatives.

The Superfund Community Relations staff would like to thank all those who submitted their comments. Many valuable suggestions for improving and expanding this handbook were received, and have been incorporated in this edition.

Questions and comments concerning this handbook should be addressed to: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Emergency and Remedial Response (WH-548E), 401 M Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN SUPERFUND

The Superfund community relations effort promotes two-way communication between members of the public,[1] including PRPs, and the lead government agency responsible for response actions. The community relations activities discussed in this Handbook provide the opportunity for interested persons to comment on, and provide input to, decisions about response actions. These activities ensure that the local public is provided with accurate and timely information about response plans and progress and that their concerns about planned actions are heard by the lead agency. A site-specific and well-planned community relations effort is an integral part of every Superfund response.

This handbook offers policy and guidance on planning and conducting Superfund community relations programs. It emphasizes the approaches and activities that have proven successful in years of experience with community relations in Superfund. This introductory chapter describes the Superfund community relations program and its objectives, presents some background on the program, and explains how the handbook should be used.

1.1 THE PROGRAM AND ITS OBJECTIVES

The Superfund community relations program, as a whole, consists of all those activities conducted throughout the planning and implementation of Superfund responses to encourage communication between government staff and the local public, as well as the planning, coordination, and administration of such activities.

The overall objectives of Superfund community relations are as follows:

- **Give the public the opportunity to comment on and provide input to technical decisions**. An ongoing community relations effort should encourage and assist the local public to contribute to agency decisions that will have long-term effects on their community.

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[1] This guidance is oriented primarily to a particular segment of the local public in the vicinity of a Superfund site. It recognizes that members of the local public other than PRPs and State officials may have different concerns and interests. The guidance helps EPA and State staff coordinate with these special groups and individuals. The guidance is not intended to describe our relationships with other members of the local public; namely PRPs and State officials. However, because this guidance is a comprehensive statement on EPA's public participation program, it will necessarily include outreach with PRPs. Finally, the terms: *local public*, *communities*, *citizens*, and *interested parties* are interchangeable. They all represent the universe of affected and interested public, including PRPs.

- **Inform the public of planned or ongoing actions**. Community relations activities should inform the local public of the nature of the environmental problem, the threat it may pose, the responses under consideration, and the progress being made.

- **Focus and resolve conflict**. Conflict may be unavoidable in some circumstances, but it can be constructive if it brings into the open alternative viewpoints based upon sound reasons for criticism or dissent. An effective community relations effort channels conflict into a forum where it can serve a useful purpose.

These objectives guide the planning and implementation of community relations efforts in each Superfund response.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Experience with the Superfund program since 1980 has yielded some general conclusions about the nature of public involvement in hazardous waste problems and, in turn, about the most helpful approaches to community relations in Superfund. These conclusions are the basis for the objectives listed above, and underlie the specific recommendations in the following chapters of this handbook.

EPA has found that its **decision-making ability is enhanced by actively soliciting comments and information from the public**. Public input can be useful in two ways:

1. Communities are able to provide valuable information on local history, citizen involvement, and site conditions; and

2. Identifying the public's concerns enables EPA to fashion a response that is more responsive to community needs.

The people who are the most concerned about a site or release are usually those who consider themselves to be directly affected, believing their health to be endangered, or perceiving possible economic loss. Community relations efforts must focus on these people.

EPA has found that **there can be no set formulas for a community relations program**. Each community is different. The issues of importance to the public, the level of concern, the history of public involvement, and the social structure of the community will vary from site to site. Community relations efforts must therefore be tailored to the distinctive needs of each community as stated by that community. They also must be tied to the technical response schedule.

Nonetheless, **the best way to reach concerned citizens is usually through**

informal activities initiated early in the response and continued to its completion. Informal interviews in a living room, face-to-face discussions with a remedial project manager, or frequent telephone calls are the preferred means of ensuring open and candid communication. When large public meetings are needed, they must be very carefully planned to enhance productive communication.

Finally, **there are no guaranteed results**, even from the most carefully planned community relations effort. Keeping the community well-informed and actively soliciting information and ideas from the community is critical for the decision-making process. However, this proccess will not guarantee that the community will be entirely satisfied with the remedial or removal action selected for the site. Nevertheless, the level of anger and frustration is almost certain to be higher in a community that has been "shut out" or ignored than a community that has had a voice in the process. A community relations program should, therefore, not try to quell controversy, but rather strive to anticipate, identify, and acknowledge areas of conflict so that decisions can be made with full understanding of community views.

1.3 HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook has been organized to be as useful as possible to the staff responsible for planning Superfund community relations programs and conducting community relations activities. It contains nine chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction: Community Relations in Superfund.

Chapter 2: Community Relations Requirements and Policies is a concise summary of all requirements for community relations in Superfund. Certain requirements for a community relations program are specified in the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP)**(8)**[2], the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986**(12)**, and other EPA policy. This chapter identifies clearly, at the outset, those required community relations activities for each response, as distinguished from supplemental activities that are recommended in EPA guidance and this handbook.

Chapter 3: Conducting Community Interviews and Designing Community Relations Programs for Remedial Responses explains in detail the two critical steps in planning a community relations program for a Superfund remedial action; that is, a response consistent with permanent remedy at a site listed on the National Priorities List (NPL):

(1) Conducting the community interviews (or on-site discussions) used to identify key members of the affected public, their concerns, and the best means to involve and communicate with the public; and

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[2] Bold face numbers appearing in parentheses refer to the bibliographical entries in Appendix E, "References".

(2) Developing a site-specific community relations plan (CRP), based on the needs expressed by the community during community interviews, that specifies the types of community relations activities to be conducted in the remedial action.

Additionally, this chapter describes community relations as it is to be conducted for the Superfund Innovative Technology Evaluation (SITE)**(35)(36)** demonstration program.

Chapter 4: Conducting Community Relations Programs During Remedial Responses provides guidance for conducting community relations activities during especially critical points in a remedial response: before NPL listing; during the remedial investigation and feasibility study; during the remedial design and action stages; and during operation and maintenance. It also discusses how to adapt community relations activities to unanticipated developments.

Chapter 5: Community Relations During Removal Actions is currently reserved for guidance on conducting community relations activities during removal actions.

Chapter 6: Community Relations During Enforcement Actions is currently reserved for guidance on conducting community relations when an enforcement action is initiated or ongoing at an Enforcement- or PRP-lead site.

Chapter 7: Technical Assistance is currently reserved for guidance on the use of technical advisors to community groups at Superfund sites.

Chapter 8: Interagency Coordination is an overview of the respective roles and responsibilities for community relations of the various government agencies that may be involved in managing a Superfund response: EPA, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, other Federal agencies, and State agencies.

Chapter 9: Administration of Community Relations Programs focuses on roles and responsibilities for administering community relations, and, in particular, the functions that may be handled by contractors.

There are six appendices to this handbook. The first three appendices relate to specific community relations program elements. Appendix A briefly discusses a number of activities that may be used in a community relations program. Appendix B presents a format for community relations plans and a model plan illustrating that format. Appendix C presents a format for responsiveness summaries and a model responsiveness summary illustrating that format.

The final three appendices contain helpful reference and resource information. Appendix D provides a glossary to key program and technical terms and acronyms that are commonly used in the Superfund process. Appendix E lists all bibliographical information for EPA regulatory and policy documents referred to in the body of the handbook. These documents are listed alphabetically in the Appendix. Appendix F is a list of Headquarters

Superfund Community Relations staff, Regional Superfund Community Relations Coordinators, and Regional Public Health Advisors from the Centers for Disease Control.

This handbook need not be read from cover to cover. For an adequate understanding of all phases of the program, however, it is suggested that this handbook be read first in its entirety. This handbook is intended to serve as a convenient and helpful reference to guide those responsible for planning and implementing community relations programs. The handbook has therefore been written to enable users to find the guidance they need quickly and efficiently, and without the need to consult several chapters at once. For example, a reader interested in a specific community relations technique could go directly to Appendix A for a full discussion of this technique. Another reader interested in suggested activities for remedial actions would refer to Chapter 4. To find guidance for a particular type of action, or any special situation, the reader is referred first to the Table of Contents

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY RELATIONS REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

This chapter summarizes the requirements for community relations at Superfund sites. Its purpose is to identify clearly, at the outset, those community relations activities that are required, in contrast to those that are recommended, suggested, or otherwise discretionary. These requirements are applicable to all sites -- EPA and State-lead -- at which a Superfund response is being undertaken.

The requirements discussed in this chapter are set forth in the 1985 National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) in the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA), and in EPA policy documents referred to in this chapter. These documents are listed alphabetically in Appendix E. This chapter does not include additional community relations requirements expected to take effect with the 1988 revision of the NCP and EPA policy which will implement those regulations. These requirements are presently under development but have not yet been promulgated. Therefore, they are omitted from this chapter, but, where known, they are included in other sections of this interim edition of the handbook. A final edition of the handbook is expected soon after the revised NCP is issued.

EPA also recognizes that Federal agencies may have their own community relations programs and guidance. However, SARA §120(a)(2) states that EPA guidelines, rules, regulations, and criteria are applicable to Federal agencies, and that Federal agencies may not adopt or utilize any guidelines, rules, regulations, or criteria which are inconsistent with those established by the EPA Administrator under CERCLA. This handbook provides Federal agencies with the guidance to more closely coordinate community relations efforts in the planning and implementation of their community relations programs to be consistent with CERCLA, the NCP, and EPA policies. EPA Regional offices should have close interaction with other Federal agencies to ensure that guidance is provided on a site-by-site basis.

This chapter first discusses community relations requirements for removal actions. Section 2.2 then addresses requirements pertaining to the following activities during a remedial response:

- Community interviews;
- Community relations plan;
- Information repositories and administrative records;
- Proposed plan[1] and RI/FS completion;
- Public comment period and opportunity for public meeting on proposed plan, administrative order on consent, consent decree;
- Responsiveness summary;

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[1] Proposed plan, as used in the handbook, refers to a proposed remedial action plan.

- Explanation of differences;
- Public notice of selection of remedy;
- Revision of the community relations plan, if necessary, for remedial design/remedial action (RD/RA); and
- Fact sheet and notification on engineering design.

Sections 2.3 and 2.4 explain requirements and procedures for adding and deleting sites from the National Priorities List (NPL). Section 2.5 discusses community relations activities in the SITE program. Exhibit 2-1 is a matrix summarizing these requirements, their source in statute, regulation, and EPA policy documents, and their applicability to various phases in a Superfund response.

It should be emphasized that while this chapter addresses requirements, merely fulfilling these requirements will not necessarily result in adequate community relations efforts. Rather, these requirements are the foundation for more comprehensive and effective activities described in the following chapters. The requirements have been kept to a minimum to allow for a flexible community relations approach that can take into account the needs of different communities.

2.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR REMOVAL ACTIONS

In defining removal actions, the NCP §300.65(b) stipulates that if a lead agency determines that "there is a threat to public health, welfare or the environment ... the lead agency may take any appropriate action to abate, stabilize, mitigate or eliminate the release or threat of release". Such actions may last only a few days, or may require longer-term measures. Removal actions may be taken at sites that have not been ranked on the NPL, as well as at NPL sites.

The NCP stipulates that the lead agency must designate a spokesperson at removal sites, who will inform the community of actions taken, respond to inquiries, and provide information concerning the release.

As soon as it appears that a removal action may last longer than 45 days, the NCP requires that a community relations plan be prepared. (The proposed NCP will make this 120 days.) This plan must be based on community interviews conducted, at a minimum, with community leaders and concerned, affected citizens. The community relations plan must specify the communications activities which will be undertaken during the response. In addition, an information repository should be established for removals that last longer than 45 days. The community relations plan prepared for the site should be placed in this repository.

SARA requires several other public participation activities pursuant to §113 and consistent with §117. §113 requires that an administrative record file must be established and made available to the public. EPA is also charged with developing procedures for appropriate participation by the public in the development of the administrative record. The proposed NCP will contain suggestions for those procedures which include notifications, comment

EXHIBIT 2-1

CERCLA COMMUNITY RELATIONS REQUIREMENTS[2]

Technical Phase: Site Activity	Requirement(s)	Requirement Source(s)
	REMOVAL ACTIONS	
Agency Spokesperson	The lead agency must designate a spokesperson to inform the public about the release and actions taken, to respond to questions, and provide information.	The National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Control Contingency Plan (NCP) §300.67(b); Superfund Community Relations Policy Memorandum of 1983 (Superfund Community Relations Policy, 1983)**(34)**.
Community Relations Plan (CRP)	A CRP, based on community interviews, must be prepared for removals longer than 45 days.	NCP §300.67(b); Superfund Community Relations Policy, 1983; Superfund Removal Procedures, Revision No. 2, (OSWER) (August 20, 1984).
Administrative Record	The Agency must establish an administrative record upon which selection of a response action shall be based and make the administrative record available to the public at or near the site and at a central location.	CERCLA §113(k), CERCLA Reauthorization Transition Guidance (October 24, 1986).

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[2] Community relations requirements apply to both Fund-financed and enforcement sites.

EXHIBIT 2-1 (continued)

CERCLA COMMUNITY RELATIONS REQUIREMENTS

Technical Phase: Site Activity	Requirement(s)	Requirement Source(s)
REMEDIAL RESPONSES		
Prior to Remedial Investigation (RI):		
Community Interviews	On-site discussions must be held with local officials and community members in order to assess their concerns and determine appropriate community relations activities.	Superfund Community Relations Policy, 1983.
Community Relations Plan (CRP)	A complete CRP based on community interviews must be developed and approved before remedial investigation field activities start.	NCP §300.67(c); Superfund Community Relations Policy, 1983.
Information Repository	An information repository must be established which includes each item developed, received, published, or made available pursuant to §117. These items must be made available for public inspection and copying at or near facility.	SARA §117(d).
Administrative Record	The Agency must establish an administrative record upon which the Agency shall base the selection of a response action. The Agency must provide for participation of interested persons in the development of the administrative record.	SARA §113(k).

EXHIBIT 2-1 (continued)

CERCLA COMMUNITY RELATIONS REQUIREMENTS

Technical Phase: Site Activity	Requirement(s)	Requirement Source(s)
Feasibility Study (FS)/ Proposed Plan:		
Notice and Analysis of the RI/FS and Proposed Plan	An RI/FS and proposed plan must be developed. Notice of the availability of the RI/FS and proposed plan, including a brief summary of the proposed plan, must be published in a major local newspaper of general circulation. The notice must also announce the public comment period.	SARA §117(a) and (d).
Public Comment Period on RI/FS and Proposed Plan	The RI/FS and proposed plan must be provided to the public for review and comment for a period of not fewer than 21 calendar days. Both oral and written comments must be considered.	SARA §117(a)(2); NCP §300.67(d); Superfund Community Relations Policy, 1983.
Public Comment Period on Consent Decrees	For enforcement sites: Proposed cleanup agreement consent decrees must be filed with the court at least 30 days before a final judgment is entered into. A 30-day comment period must be provided to persons not named as parties to the action to comment on the proposed judgment before its entry by the court as a final judgment. Written comments, views, or allegations relating to the proposed judgment shall be considered and filed with the court.	SARA §122(d) and (i); NCP §300.67(g); 28 CFR 50.7.

EXHIBIT 2-1 (continued)

CERCLA COMMUNITY RELATIONS REQUIREMENTS

Technical Phase: Site Activity	Requirement(s)	Requirement Source(s)
Opportunity for Public Meeting	Before adoption of any remedial action plan, an opportunity for a public meeting at or near the facility at issue must be provided. A meeting transcript must be prepared and made available to the public.	SARA §113 and §117(a)(2); NCP §300.67(d); Superfund Community Relations Policy, 1983.
Pre-ROD Significant Changes	The final remedial action plan or ROD shall be accompanied by a discussion of any significant changes (and the reasons for such changes) in the proposed plan and a response to each of the significant comments, criticisms, and new data submitted in written or oral presentations. Refer to the Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: The Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for further information.	SARA §117(b).
Responsiveness Summary	A response to each of the significant comments, criticisms, and new data submitted on the proposed plan and RI/FS must be prepared and must accompany the ROD.	SARA §113 and §117(b); NCP §300.67(e); Superfund Community Relations Policy, 1983.

EXHIBIT 2-1 (continued)

CERCLA COMMUNITY RELATIONS REQUIREMENTS

Technical Phase: Site Activity	**Requirement(s)**	**Requirement Source(s)**
Public Notice After Selection of Alternative	The final remedial action plan or ROD must be made available to the public and a notice which states the basis and purpose of the selected action must be published after the Agency selects a remedy and before commencement of any remedial action. At a minimum, the notice must be published in a major local newspaper of general circulation.	SARA §113(k)(2)(B) and §117(b) and (d).
Notice and Comment Period on Settlement Actions	A notice of the proposed settlement must be published in the Federal Register at least 30 days prior to the date any de minimis or cost recovery settlement becomes effective. Persons who are not parties to the proposed settlements must be provided an opportunity to file written comments for a period of 30 days.	CERCLA §122(i).
After ROD Is Signed:		
Revision of the CRP	During remedial design, the CRP should be revised, if necessary, based on community concerns discovered during interviews and other	Superfund Community Relations Policy, 1983.

EXHIBIT 2-1 (continued)

CERCLA COMMUNITY RELATIONS REQUIREMENTS

Technical Phase: Site Activity	Requirement(s)	Requirement Source(s)
	activities as pertains to the remedial design and construction phase.	
Explanation of Differences	After adoption of a final remedial action plan, if any remedial action is taken, or any enforcement action under §106 is taken, or if any settlement or consent decree under §106 or §122 is entered into, and if such action, settlement, or decree differs in any significant respects from the final plan, the lead agency shall publish an explanation of the significant differences and the reasons such changes were made. See Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: The Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for further information.	SARA §117(c).
Remedial Design:		
Fact Sheet on Engineering Design[3]	A fact sheet must be prepared explaining the final engineering design and should be made available to the public.	Policy on CERCLA Compliance with Other Environmental Statutes **(16)**.

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[3] This activity is currently under review as part of the proposed NCP. Guidance will be issued once the NCP requirements are finalized.

EXHIBIT 2-1 (continued)

CERCLA COMMUNITY RELATIONS REQUIREMENTS

Technical Phase: Site Activity	**Requirement(s)**	**Requirement Source(s)**
NPL Additions and Deletions:		
Publication of Proposed Rules And Notification Of Public Comment Period	Proposed addition and deletion rules must be published in the Federal Register and in a local newspaper of general circulation with request for comments..	Administrative Procedure Act, 5 USCA §553(b) and (c) (1).
Publication of Final Rules	Publication of the final rules must be made not less than 30 days before their effective date.	Administrative Procedure Act, 5 USCA §553(d).

SITE PROGRAM

Site Demonstration Phase:		
Selection of Demonstration Site	A public notice and public comment period are required prior to final selection of demonstration site for innovative technologies.	SARA §311(b)(5)(E).

periods, and responsiveness summaries. Interim guidance will be issued in the future. Until this time, refer to Appendix G for a list of recommended community relations activities for different types of removal actions.

2.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR REMEDIAL RESPONSES[4]

2.2.1 Community Interviews

EPA policy requires that a community relations effort accompany any Superfund remedial investigation and response, whether it be Federal-, State-[5], or enforcement-lead. Once the lead agency has set priorities and evaluated a site for remedial response, community relations efforts become an integral part of site activities. At the beginning of the remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) stage, before RI field work begins, EPA or State staff must conduct interviews with affected residents and community leaders to determine their level of interest in the site, major concerns and issues, and information needs. Chapter III provides additional information on conducting interviews.

2.2.2 Community Relations Plan

Based upon the community interviews, a community relations plan must be prepared and should include a description of the site background, history of community involvement at the site, community relations strategies, a schedule of community relations activities, and a list of affected and interested groups and individuals. This plan must be completed before RI field activities begin. See Chapter 3 and Appendix B for more information about preparation of the CRP.

2.2.3 Information Repository and Administrative Record

SARA requires that an administrative record for selection of a response action be established at or near the facility at issue. The administrative record shall include documents which EPA considered or relied on in selecting a response action.

EPA requires that an information repository be established at or near the site to comply with §117(d) of SARA, which states that each item developed, received, published, or made available to the public under §117(d) must be available for public inspection and copying at or near the facility at issue.

The information repository and administrative record may be housed in the same location, and may be established at approximately the same time. The administrative record for remedial actions will be established when the remedial investigation phase begins, e.g., when the final RI/FS work plan or CRP is available. At that time, a notice should be published in a local newspaper indicating the availability of the administrative record, and, if applicable, the information repository.

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[4] These requirements also apply to operable units. (See Glossary.)

[5] Only CERCLA-funded State-lead sites must comply with these requirements.

Note that the materials in the information repository may overlap with the administrative record. The information repository maintained by the community relations coordinator may contain additional information which is of interest to the public but which does not form a basis for the response selection decision. Examples of such information include newspaper articles, press releases, and fact sheets.

2.2.4 Notification and Analysis of the Proposed Plan and Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study

SARA §117(a) and (d) require that the public be notified of the availability of the proposed plan. The public notice must identify the lead agency's preferred remedy, the other alternatives which were analyzed, the location where the administrative record can be reviewed and copied, community involvement opportunities, and the name of an agency contact. According to SARA, this notice must, at a minimum, be published in a major local newspaper of general circulation.

The proposed plan can be prepared in the form of a fact sheet or a separate document. It must clearly summarize:

- alternatives analyzed in the detailed analysis of the feasibility study;
- preferred remedy and rationale for that preference;
- any proposed waivers to §121(d)(4) cleanup standards; and
- position of the support agency on the proposed plan and preferred alternative.

Public comment must be solicited on all alternatives, not just the preferred alternative, and the information that supports the alternatives. Also, the proposed plan should clearly state that it is not the sole document on which the public should rely for information on the alternatives, and refer the reader to the information in the administrative record and repositories.

Response to releases of hazardous substances is often affected by floodplain and wetland issues. Under the EPA document entitled "Policy on Floodplain and Wetlands Assessments for CERCLA Actions" (August 6, 1985), Superfund actions must meet the substantive requirements of the Floodplain Management Executive Order (E.O. 11988), the Protection of Wetlands Executive Order (E.O. 11990), and Appendix A of 40 CFR Part 6, entitled Statement of Procedures on Floodplain Management and Wetland Protection. The purpose of Appendix A of 40 CFR Part 6 is to set forth EPA's policy and guidance for carrying out the provisions of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990.

These documents outline certain public involvement activities that may apply if a potential agency action for a site impacts a floodplain or wetland.

Lead agency staff should consult the policy and orders to ensure all public involvement requirements are fulfilled. Further guidance on the application of these orders and policies for the community relations program will be forthcoming.

2.2.5 Public Comment Period and Public Meeting

The NCP requires for all remedial actions at NPL sites -- including Fund-financed and enforcement actions -- that the RI/FS and proposed plan be provided to the public for its review and comment for a period of at least 21 days. SARA §117(a)(2) also requires that the agency provide a "reasonable opportunity for submission of written and oral comments and an opportunity for a public meeting at or near the facility." A transcript of the meeting conducted during the public comment period (pursuant to §117a), must be made available to the public and must be part of the administrative record. It is also recommended that the transcript be placed in the information repositories.

2.2.6 Public Comment Period on the Administrative Order on Consent or Consent Decree (AOC/CD)

All consent decrees, whether for removal actions, for RI/FS work or for RD/RA, require public notice in the Federal Register and public comment opportunities. This is pursuant to CERCLA §122(d) and follows U.S. Department of Justice policy established under 28 CFR 50.7. A notice of the consent decree must be published 30 days prior to filing in court as a final judgment. Comments received during the public comment period must be considered and filed with the court by the U.S. DOJ. At the conclusion of the public comment period the U.S. DOJ will recommend that the decree either go unchanged or be modified, based upon public comments.

Administrative orders may be used for removal actions, RI/FS work or for settlements under CERCLA §122(g) or (h). Administrative orders used for removal actions and for RI/FS work do not normally require public comment opportunities. However, once these documents become final, they should be made available for public review. Administrative orders on consent for settlements under §122(g) and (h) require a notice in the Federal Register of the proposed settlement, an opportunity for public comment, consideration by the lead Agency of the comments and a determination by the lead Agency either that the order go unchanged or be modified.

2.2.7 Responsiveness Summary

At the conclusion of the comment period, SARA and the NCP require that a response to significant comments, criticisms, and new data submitted in written or oral form during the comment period be prepared, and that it accompany the final remedial action plan, or other decision document. This has routinely been accomplished in the form of a responsiveness summary. For further guidance on preparing responsiveness summaries, see Chapter 4 and Appendix A.

2.2.8 Addressing Significant Changes Prior to Adoption of Final Remedial Action Plan

Before preparing the ROD, SARA §117(b) requires the lead agency to analyze the final selected remedy against the alternatives described in the RI/FS and proposed plan, to determine whether any "significant changes" have been made to the selected alternative as it was presented for public review and comment. What constitutes a "significant change" will be a site-specific determination based on the contents of the RI/FS and proposed plan. If significant changes have been made, these changes must be documented in the decision summary section of the ROD. Significant changes may require additional public involvement opportunities under SARA §117(a). See Section 4.3.4 of this Handbook and Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: The Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for guidance on required activities in these instances.

2.2.9 Public Notice

Under SARA §117(b) and (d), the public must be informed through a public notice in a major local newspaper of general circulation when the agency has issued the proposed plan and later when the final remedial action plan or ROD is adopted. The final plan must be made available to the public before remedial action begins. Refer to Chapter 4 and Appendix A for further information on preparing public notices.

2.2.10 Revision of the Community Relations Plan

Prior to remedial design, the community relations plan must be revised, if necessary, to account for the needs and concerns of the community during remedial design and remedial action. Community interviews or other activities may be conducted to gather these concerns. Chapter III has additional information about conducting interviews and developing a community relations plan.

2.2.11 Addressing Post-ROD Significant Changes (Explanation of Differences)

SARA §117(c) requires an explanation of significant differences after the adoption of a final remedial action plan or ROD if:

- any remedial action is taken;
- any enforcement action under Section 106 is taken; or
- any settlement or consent decree under Section 106 or Section 112 is entered into

and if such action, settlement or decree differs in any significant respects from the final plan or ROD, the lead agency must publish an explanation of the significant differences and the reasons such changes were made. Refer to the Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: The Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for further guidance on requirements in these circumstances.

2.2.12 Fact Sheet and Notice on the Remedial Engineering Design

Consistent with EPA's "Policy on CERCLA Compliance with Other Environmental Statutes", a fact sheet on the engineering design of the remedial action must be prepared and made available to the public prior to completion of the final engineering design.[6] The public should be notified of the availability of the fact sheet. The notification should briefly explain the design. This may be accomplished through a general mailing of the fact sheet to all individuals on the site mailing list; by placing an ad in a local newspaper of general circulation; or other means of communication deemed appropriate. Nonsignificant changes that occur during the design phase may be summarized in the design fact sheet for further public information. See Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: The Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for further guidance on this issue.

2.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONS OF SITES TO THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

Under the NCP, EPA is required to revise the NPL at least annually. The NCP sets forth three mechanisms for establishing and amending the NPL: the Hazard Ranking System (HRS); designation by States of their top priority releases; and determination that a site poses a significant threat to public health, welfare, or the environment. Once EPA has decided to add a site to the NPL, the Agency has elected to use the procedure for rule-making specified in the Administrative Procedure Act. Under this Act, EPA is required to publish the proposed rule in the Federal Register, with an invitation to interested parties to make comments. EPA must then consider these comments in making revisions to the rule. The final rule is published in the Federal Register.

2.4 REQUIREMENTS FOR DELETION OF SITES FROM THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

A site can be deleted from the NPL either because a remedial action has been completed or because it has been determined that remedial action is unnecessary. The NCP lists three criteria of which one must be met to delete a site:

1. EPA determines that responsible parties have completed all appropriate response actions;

2. EPA determines that all appropriate Fund-financed response has been completed, and that no further cleanup by responsible parties is needed; or

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[6] This activity is currently under review as part of the proposed NCP. Guidance will be issued once the NCP requirements are finalized.

3. Based on a remedial investigation, EPA determines that the site poses no significant threat to public health, welfare, or the environment and, therefore, construction of remedial measures is not appropriate.

Procedures for site deletion from the NPL are similar to the rule-making procedures for NPL site additions described in 2.3. §553(b) and (c) of the Administrative Procedure Act requires the following steps for deleting a site from the NPL:

- A Notice of Intent to Delete prepared by Regional staff must be published concurrently in the Federal Register and appropriate local publications;
- The Notice of Intent to Delete must include notification of a 30-day comment period on the proposed rule;
- The final rule must be published not less than 30 days before the effective date.

Public notification statements are prepared by Regional staff. The Notice of Intent to Delete must appear in the Federal Register and appropriate local publications.

2.5 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SUPERFUND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY EVALUATION (SITE) PROGRAM

The Superfund Innovative Technology Evaluation (SITE) program is designed to enhance the development and use of innovative technologies for hazardous waste remedial and removal actions. Under this program a wide range of waste types will be screened and specific sites will be selected as candidates for a demonstration project. SARA §311(b)(5)(E) requires an opportunity for a public notice and public comment period prior to the final selection of a demonstration site. It is suggested that Community Relations Coordinators and Remedial Project Managers coordinate closely to ensure this public comment opportunity is implemented. Important additional guidance on community relations during SITE projects can be found in Section 3.3 of this handbook.

CHAPTER 3

CONDUCTING COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS AND DESIGNING COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAMS FOR REMEDIAL RESPONSES

This chapter presents guidance for planning and designing community relations programs for remedial responses. Planning and designing a community relations program for a remedial response requires:

- Conducting community interviews; and
- Developing a community relations plan.

The information gathered during community interviews provides the basis for the development of site-specific community relations plans. By designing a plan targeted to a particular community and offering regular opportunities for public involvement in response decisions, EPA and State agencies can obtain very valuable information, and encourage those most affected by the decision to participate in the process. Often, remedial investigation workplans have been changed based on information gathered during community interviews.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. Section 3.1 provides guidance for community relations planning, including recommendations for conducting community interviews. Section 3.2 discusses the design of a community relations program, with guidance on how to select activities, structure a program, and prepare community relations plans. Section 3.3 describes community relations activities for SITE demonstration projects. Guidance for implementing the community relations effort outlined in the plan, with details on selecting the types of activities most appropriate for different phases of a remedial response, is presented in Chapter 4.

3.1 PLANNING AND CONDUCTING COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

The success of community relations planning depends first and foremost on community interviews. Community interviews are discussions with State and local officials, community leaders, media representatives, potentially responsible parties, and/or interested citizens which take place in informal settings such as homes and offices in the community. To be most successful, it is important that these interviews be face-to-face discussions to determine public concern and learn how and when the public want to be involved in site response activities. If individuals conducting the community interviews actively seek information about public concerns and informational needs, the communication activities will be better targeted to the specific needs of the people in the community. Before conducting community interviews, staff need to:

- Confer with the Remedial Project Manager and other Regional and State staff to acquire information about the site;

- Identify interested officials, citizens, and organized groups; and
- Schedule interviews with these individuals.

Once these preparatory tasks have been completed, the interviews can be conducted. It is suggested that interviews be conducted by the Remedial Project Manager, community relations staff, perhaps enforcement staff, and possibly contractors.

Some situations may occur where only a few selected interviews or informal discussions may need to be conducted to complete the information necessary to develop a successful CRP. This may occur when revising the CRP to address the public's concerns during RD/RA, if there has been a great deal of current interaction with the community through the ROD process. In such cases, it may be necessary to conduct only a few, informal discussions by telephone or in person with selected, well-informed individuals who clearly represent the community to provide a sufficient basis for the development of a revised CRP. These are site-specific decisions that must be made by the lead agency with input from the support agency to decide which discussions and how many are appropriate to develop a CRP that will address the public's concerns and enhance the response action.

Community interviews frequently set the tone for the agency's future contacts with the public. Those conducting the community interviews should ask the public what mechanisms for communication will enhance their ability to make their opinions and questions known. This initial exchange of information should take place through individual discussions, rather than through large public meetings or news media.

3.1.1 Background Review Prior to Community Interviews

Staff preparing for community interviews should first become familiar with the technical and legal issues at the site and attempt to identify those aspects of the contamination problem that are of relevance to the local community. To acquire the necessary background information, including names, maps, and documents, certain steps should be performed, including:

- Meeting with EPA or State technical, legal, and enforcement staff;
- Reviewing agency files; and
- Researching local newspaper articles.

When reviewing background information, staff should remember that numerous factors could influence public perceptions of the site problem, such as:

- Nearness of area residences to the site;
- Nearness of schools or playgrounds to the site;

- Visibility of the site;
- Presence of livestock, crops, or other vegetation near the site;
- Location of a public water supply;
- Location of nearby recreational lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and parks;
- Measures to control or limit site access;
- Presence of other hazardous waste or Superfund sites in the area;
- Activity of local interest groups or press; and
- Role of responsible parties within the community (e.g., are responsible parties major employers in the area?).

This kind of technical review does not establish the level or focus of public concern; rather, it provides an initial opportunity for staff to become familiar with technical issues associated with the site and to understand the site from the community's perspective.

3.1.2 Developing a Contact List for Community Interviews

Community relations staff next should consult with agency officials to identify interested citizens and local officials who should be contacted during the community interviews. In addition, staff should review agency files to identify individuals who have expressed concern about the site and research local newspaper articles for the names of community leaders. Additional names also may be collected during the interview process, particularly those of individuals whose knowledge of the community may not be obvious to the nonresident (e.g., a visiting nurse who comes once a month, but who knows the community well). Individuals and groups that typically are interviewed include:

- State agency staff, such as officials from health, environmental, or natural resources departments;
- Local agency staff and elected officials, such as county health department officials, county commissioners, mayor or township administrator, and officials serving on environmental commissions, local advisory committees, and planning boards;
- Representatives of citizens' groups organized to address site issues;

- Area residents and individuals not affiliated with any group;
- Local business representatives (e.g., from the Chamber of Commerce or the Council of Governments);
- Local civic groups and neighborhood associations;
- Local chapters of public interest groups (e.g., Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, League of Women Voters); and
- Potentially responsible parties.

At sites where community interest is high, it may not be possible to meet with all interested parties. In these situations, staff should determine which individuals are likely to provide the greatest variety of perspectives about the site. A broad range of interviewees is particularly important at sites where citizens' groups or other _ad hoc_ organizations have formed. Staff should _always_ speak to more than one group representative (since different viewpoints and constituencies may be represented within a group) and _never_ limit conversations to the most visible groups or individuals.

3.1.3 Scheduling Community Interviews

Community interviews typically can be scheduled over 2 to 3 days, although at some sites extra time may be necessary for additional unplanned interviews and follow-up conversations. It is advisable that the number of individuals interviewed at any one meeting be limited to one or two persons, and that meetings be arranged at a time and place convenient to the interviewee. Some individuals may feel most comfortable being interviewed at home, while others may prefer to meet at a local meeting hall, library, or restaurant.

When contacting individuals to schedule interviews, community relations staff should explain briefly and clearly the purpose of the interviews. Specifically, staff should state that they will be talking with area residents and local officials about community concerns regarding the site. Explain that community interviews are a planning activity held before the RI begins so that a community relations plan relevant to community needs can be prepared; individuals contacted should understand that staff cannot provide detailed technical information about site problems or future site actions. While community members may be more or less willing to participate in the interviews, generally most citizens, including PRPs, will perceive the discussions as a significant opportunity to express their concerns in a productive manner. Staff should speak first with State and local officials to obtain background information and to let these people know that area residents will also be interviewed. Officials have an understandable interest in agency activities that affect their constituents. However, these discussions with elected officials cannot in themselves generate enough information to develop an adequate community relations plan. Special efforts must be made to interview local residents, particularly those who are not affiliated with any group. As a simple matter of courtesy, staff might send letters to each of the individuals that will be interviewed to confirm the date and time of the interview, and the place in which the interview is scheduled to take place, as well as to restate that the interview is for agency planning purposes.

3.1.4 Conducting Community Interviews

Community relations staff should begin community interviews by reiterating the purpose of the discussions and providing general information about community relations and the Superfund process. Officials and community members usually appreciate brief and simple explanations about what happens during the Superfund response, and when public input will be sought. Staff should refer requests for site-specific information to appropriate program staff. Alternatively, staff should get back to community members with the information they have requested, or have specialists contact the community members directly. Discussions about specific technical or enforcement issues at the site should not dominate the community interviews. Staff conducting the interviews should also make clear that while the purpose of these interviews is to identify community attitudes and concerns, the plan prepared from the interviews will not use direct quotations without approval of the individual to be quoted. Even the use of indirect quotation, or attribution of attitudes or ideas to individuals, should be used with discretion.

Some staff may feel more comfortable if they prepare questions in advance of the community interviews. Questions that would be appropriate at most sites include:

- When did you first become aware of problems at the site? What is your understanding of the history of the site?
- Have you had any problems on your property that you think are attributable to the site?
- What contacts have you had with government officials about the site? Do you feel these officials have been responsive to your concerns?
- Are you aware of the history of site operations?
- Do you know of any parties who were involved with these site operations?
- What are your current concerns about the site?
- Have you participated in activities concerning the site?
- How would you like to be involved in future activities?

- How can EPA or the State best provide you information concerning response activities?

- What kinds of information do you need?

- How do you want to get that information and how frequently?

- Can you suggest other individuals or groups that should be contacted for additional information?

Developing a list of questions frequently helps identify those viewpoints that are most widely held in the community. Conflicting responses can be as revealing as consensus because they indicate which issues are likely to be most controversial during cleanup activities. Staff should investigate differing interpretations of a situation, particularly when officials and residents disagree about the seriousness of a problem. At the same time, it is important to anticipate what kinds of information are to be sought from which individuals, and to pose different questions accordingly. For example, while a local health department official would be a good source of information about response actions at a site, he or she might not be able to discuss objectively how the local community has perceived health department efforts. Similarly, the leader of a citizens' group may comment extensively on the group's concerns, but might not be able to discuss area-wide environmental issues and concerns.

In the final analysis, the best questions are usually those that arise spontaneously during a discussion. As is the case with any community relations activity, it is never fully possible to anticipate how the public and local officials will respond. Some community members may discuss their concerns fully and openly, without any focused questioning. Others may be more reserved. Similarly, many officials will welcome the agency's presence at the site and even offer to help provide information to the local community, while other officials will resent the intrusion of agency officials. If citizens or officials appear uninterested, ask questions that address why concern is limited and where any emerging concern is likely to focus. In these situations, questions about the community at large are often helpful:

- How sensitive is the public in the area to environmental issues?

- How does the public typically perceive the presence of Federal or State officials in the locality?

- What kinds of issues have attracted the most public attention?

At all times, interviewers should listen carefully, realizing that they represent their agency and are establishing the basis for later meetings between the agency and community members. This is especially true if officials or community members are antagonistic towards or critical of the agency. In such cases, understanding why these individuals hold these attitudes is important. Perhaps previous response efforts have fallen short of their expectations. Perhaps people think their concerns have been ignored. Citizen displeasure or hostility should not be viewed as a personal affront; frequently, angry individuals are a valuable source of information about what has gone wrong in the past and which issues are most sensitive. In such situations, staff should acknowledge the individual's complaint, and thank him or her for the contribution, without either endorsing or rejecting the basis for the complaint.

Another potentially difficult situation is the appearance of reporters during community interviews. If possible, discourage their attendance beforehand, as it might inhibit a frank and open conversation. Reporters should be asked, instead, to meet separately with community relations staff. If reporters nevertheless appear during community interviews, ensure that they understand that the purpose of the discussion is to gather information about the community, and not to answer questions about the problems at the site or the government's plan for remedial response. The reporter should also be asked for his/her views and comments.

At the end of each community interview, staff should ask if the citizen or official knows of other people who have expressed interest or concern about the site. Staff should encourage citizens and officials to contact them later if they feel they did not have the opportunity to discuss any current concerns or if they have problems or concerns in the future. Staff should provide the names and telephone numbers of the agency's community relations coordinator and the remedial project manager. Finally, as a suggested follow-up to community interviews, the coordinator responsible for the site might send a brief letter to all individuals interviewed, thanking them for their time and contribution and explaining when the CRP will be completed and how a copy may be obtained.

3.2 DESIGNING COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAMS

The design of a community relations program for a remedial action depends substantially on the extent and quality of information obtained during the community interviews. Design largely involves formalizing and putting into a planning document the analysis conducted during the planning stages. Activities and approaches recommended for the community relations program should always be based on specific findings from the community interviews and supplemented with findings from file searches.

3.2.1 Identifying Citizen Concerns

In designing a community relations program, staff should first focus on distinctive features of the site and community in question. Think about how the community could be described best to a person unfamiliar with the area. What constitutes the affected community? What makes the site unique? What are the key characteristics of the community? What issues are of most concern to the community and officials? Does the level of public concern reflect the technical complexity of the problems at the site? Individuals interviewed should be asked to consider what community relations activities and approaches will be most appropriate for their community. Staff should also identify existing methods by which government communicates with the local public and determine which officials are regarded as useful sources of information within the community. This kind of information contributes substantially to determining appropriate community relations activities and approaches for a site. If local officials are uncomfortable about the presence of the agency in the community, staff should indicate their willingness to cooperate with local officials by including these individuals in community relations activities. In communities undergoing substantial development activity or economic growth, community relations staff should be sensitive to the fears of local officials that the notoriety associated with being on the NPL may adversely affect growth in the area.

The design of the program depends greatly on the level and nature of community concern as expressed by residents during community interviews. Questions that have been found to influence the extent of community involvement include the following:

- Do residents in the community believe their health, or their children's health, may be affected by hazardous substances?
- Do residents consider the site contamination as part of a larger area-wide hazardous waste problem?
- Do homeowners and businesses believe the site has caused or will cause them economic loss?
- Are agency officials perceived as credible and responsive to public problems?
- Have site problems and events been covered by local, State, regional, or national media?
- Has an active, vocal group leader (or leaders) emerged in the community?

If "yes" is the answer to several of these questions, community involvement at the site is likely to be high. Remember, however, that the seemingly quiet community may also demand staff attention. Silence should not automatically be equated with lack of interest. It is entirely possible that a silent community is unaware of how to voice its concerns or is unsure if its concerns may be legitimately raised. Limited community concern at the time of the community interviews does not eliminate the need for monitoring community concerns, because numerous factors can increase concern at any point during the remedial process. Experience has shown that community interest generally peaks when a decision is made concerning the remedial action to be conducted at a site. Another event that commonly triggers community concern is the arrival of technical crews at the site when the RI/FS begins. The knowledge and experience of those conducting community relations will therefore be very important in judging how much effort may be required to monitor a community where there is little apparent interest in site activities.

3.2.2 Selecting Techniques and Approaches

Community relations techniques and approaches should be selected primarily on the basis of information gathered during community interviews. To the extent possible, the public's preferences for how they would like to be involved should be taken into consideration. The number and complexity of community relations activities should reflect stated community needs. For example, while news releases are typically issued to announce site findings, community relations staff might also prepare statements to be included in State environmental agency newsletters, area environmental group publications, and citizen group bulletins if interest in the site is widespread. Similarly, while public meetings are most commonly held when the draft FS is completed, meetings, workshops, or informal sessions with community members may be scheduled at other points in the response process.

At sites where the contamination problem is technically complex and will, in all likelihood, require a correspondingly complicated response, staff might provide information more frequently about the site and eventual cleanup efforts. These activities also may be desirable in some cases where the contamination problem is not technically complex, but where the community members are eager to educate themselves about hazardous waste issues. Workshops, seminars, or panel discussions on hazardous waste treatment and disposal, ground-water issues, and the Superfund program also may be appropriate at these sites. Alternatively, staff should consider activities to monitor community concern at sites where interest appears limited. Periodic telephone calls to local officials and key citizen leaders, reviews of local newspapers, and informal contacts with community residents, particularly those neighboring the site, are efficient ways to find out about shifts in the level of community concern during the RI/FS. Keeping in touch is particularly important when activity is intense at a site, especially if heavy equipment or protective clothing will be used.

Technical, community relations, and enforcement staff are strongly encouraged to seek public input throughout the remedial process in addition to the required public comment period. Studies conducted by the agency during the RI are frequently of great interest, particularly because the data gathered are later used to identify cleanup alternatives for the site. Staff also may find it beneficial to provide information to the public for their review during the development of a workplan for the RI and planning stages of the FS. For example, the local community who has actually witnessed the dumping of hazardous materials have made suggestions as to where samples should be taken. Throughout the remedial process, the agency should be willing to hold informal meetings and workshops where possible to provide the public with the opportunity to review technical decisions and to offer opinions.

Finally, when selecting techniques and approaches for the community relations program at a site, staff should always consider the overall context of remedial activities. Are there other hazardous waste sites or facilities in the area? Is the site regulated under other environmental regulatory programs (e.g., *the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)*(11) or the

Clean Water Act(2)?) The community relations program at a site that is one of several sites in a town or county might include a presentation on hazardous waste problems. For example, in some communities, information sessions on toxicology have been conducted with the help of local university experts. In areas where environmental issues are particularly visible, community relations staff should anticipate greater media attention to site developments and the possibility that regional or national environmental groups may become interested in the site. At all sites, community relations efforts will be more effective if community-specific strategies of this kind are incorporated during program design.

Finally, community relations activities should be scheduled in relation to milestones for the Fund-financed response and/or enforcement action. Chapter 4 provides guidance on selecting activities for key points in the remedial process. Chapter 6 (reserved) will provide guidance on selecting activities for key points in the enforcement process. Appendix A provides descriptions of these activities, their purpose, benefits, and limitations.

3.2.3 Community Relations Plans

The NCP requires a community relations plan for all remedial response actions, and for all removals longer than 45 days. For remedial actions, the plan must be prepared before the RI/FS begins and outline community relations activities to be held during the RI/FS. The plan also should project activities that are required during remedial design and action (such as the preparation of a fact sheet after the engineering design is complete). A revised plan that projects additional activities during remedial design and remedial construction should be prepared before remedial design begins. If prepared by an EPA Regional Office, the initial community relations plan should be submitted with the RI/FS workplan. The State may request funds for the development of the CRP in the cooperative agreement application. If the CRP is not part of the cooperative agreement application, it must be incorporated into the State's annual workplan. Also, in that case, the final CRP must be submitted with the RI/FS workplan. An informational copy should be sent by the Regional Office or the State to EPA Headquarters Superfund community relations staff. If the plan is given to any one individual outside of EPA for review, it generally should be available to all who wish to review it at the same time. Even with public review, however, the Regions have the final decision on the contents of the plan.

Community relations plans document the community's concerns identified during community interviews and provide a detailed description of the community relations activities selected on the basis of these interviews. Community relations plans should not discuss generic program goals, but focus instead on site-specific community relations techniques and approaches.

As planning documents, the best community relations plans generally will be those that convey a working knowledge of the local community and its concerns, while providing a framework for addressing community concerns during the remedial response. In addition, however, it is important that the community relations program outlined in each plan include sufficient flexibility to adjust to changes either in community attitudes or in the schedule for technical activities at a site. Guidance for implementing such a program is presented in the next chapter.

While plan format can be varied to reflect the unique characteristics of a specific program, the recommended format consists of five sections and two appendices:

- Section 1: Overview of Community Relations Plan
- Section 2: Capsule Site Description
- Section 3: Community Background
- Section 4: Highlights of the Community Relations Program
- Section 5: Community Relations Activities and Timing
- Appendix A: Contact List of Key Community Leaders and Interested Parties (Note: names and addresses of private citizens should not be included in the copy of the community relations plan that is made available to the public.)
- Appendix B: Suggested Locations for Meetings and Information Repositories

These sections and appendices are described in greater detail below. Appendix B to this handbook provides a model plan in this format.

1. **Overview of Community Relations Plan**. This section should outline the purpose of the community relations plan and the distinctive or central features of the community relations effort for this site. Any special characteristics of the community and the site should also be introduced. This overview, which should be only a few paragraphs in length, should not merely restate the general goals of community relations in Superfund; rather, it should identify objectives specific to community relations during this remedial response and special circumstances that the plan will address.

2. **Capsule Site Description**. This brief section should provide readers unfamiliar with the site with the basic historical, geographical, and technical details necessary to understand why the site is listed on the NPL. Topics that should be covered include:

- Site location and relationship to homes, schools, playgrounds, businesses, lakes, streams, and parks;
- History of site use and ownership;
- Type of hazardous substances at the site, if known;
- Nature of threat and potential threat to public health and the environment, if known;

- History of inspections and studies conducted at the site; and

- Lead agency responsible for the site.

Maps showing the location of the site within the State and locality also are helpful.

3. Community Background. The community background section will usually be divided into three parts:

(1) Community profile, which should familiarize the reader with the community and analyze key local issues and interests.

(2) Chronology of community involvement, which should identify how the community has reacted to the site in the past. What actions, if any, has the public taken to resolve problems at the site? How did the public view previous response efforts at the site? How does the public perceive various levels of the government's involvement at the site? Are PRPs associated with the site or past site operations?

(3) Description of key community concerns, which should analyze the major public concerns regarding the site and the remedial process proposed to deal with those concerns.

Throughout the community background section, but particularly during the analysis of community concerns, focus on the community's perceptions of the events and problems at the site, not on the technical history of the site. This section, which may vary from three to seven pages, will contain much of the information obtained during the community interviews.

4. Highlights of the Community Relations Program. This section should summarize the design for the community relations program at the site. The approaches described should be site-specific and follow directly and logically from the preceding discussion of the community, including PRPs, and its perceptions of the problems posed by the site. Topics that will be covered in this section, usually two to four pages, include:

- Site-specific methods of communication, or activities and techniques;

- Resources to be used in the community relations program (e.g. local organizations, meeting places);

- Key individuals or organizations that are expected to play a role in community relations activities; and

- Areas of special sensitivity that must be considered during community relations and remedial activities.

5. **Community Relations Activities and Timing**. This section specifies the types of community relations activities, both required and recommended, to be conducted at the site and when they will be conducted. This section also should identify additional activities that might be appropriate at the site if concern increases or shifts, or if PRPs are present and the site is classified as a federal enforcement site. This section could include a matrix that relates the timing of community relations activities to technical and/or enforcement milestones for the site. Another useful planning tool, particularly where several agencies are involved, is a budget staffing plan.

Appendix A: Contact List of Key Community Leaders and Interested Parties. The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all officials and group representatives contacted during the community interviews, along with others who will receive information about site developments, are listed in this appendix. However, the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of private citizens contacted for interviews should not be included as a part of the plan that is made public. These names, addresses, and telephone numbers should, however, be included in the mailing list compiled for the site. The contacts identified in the Appendix should include:

- Federal elected officials;
- State elected officials;
- Local elected officials (e.g., county and city or township);
- Potentially Responsible Parties;
- Environmental groups and citizens' groups;
- EPA Regional officials (e.g., Superfund community relations coordinator, remedial project manager);
- State environmental and health department officials;
- Local health department, safety officials (e.g., fire, police), and township officials; and
- Press contacts (television, radio, newspapers).

Appendix B: Suggested Locations of Meetings and Information Repositories. The community relations plan should identify locations for the information repository and for public meetings. Facilities recommended for holding public meetings include school gyms, town halls, and library meeting rooms. The locations selected for public meetings should be accessible to handicapped individuals. Typical locations of information repositories include local libraries, town or city halls, and county offices. Hours that the information repositories will be accessible should be included, along with the names of contacts for getting into the buildings. The size or capacity of meeting rooms is a particularly helpful detail for later planning.

3.3 COMMUNITY RELATIONS FOR SITE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

The Superfund Innovative Technology Evaluation (SITE) Program is designed to enhance the development and use of innovative technologies for Superfund remedial and removal actions. The SITE program is a joint effort being conducted by the Office of Research and Development (ORD) and the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER).

Under the SITE program, proposals from technology developers are evaluated to determine technologies which are ready for demonstration at Superfund sites. A wide range of Superfund waste and site types will be screened, and specific sites will be selected as candidates for a demonstration project. SARA §311(b)(5)(E) requires an opportunity for a public notice and public comment period prior to the final selection of a demonstration site. The criteria for selecting sites will be established by OSWER, with the objective of selecting sites that are representative of high priority waste problems and allow the demonstration of the capability of the technologies. The sites will then be tentatively "matched" with appropriate technologies identified by ORD. Approximately ten demonstration projects per year will be selected, and the developer or vendor of the new technology will conduct the demonstration. The duration and scale of the project will be decided by EPA on a case-by-case basis. Demonstration locations can be EPA testing and evaluation facilities, a selected NPL site, a removal action site, a State-lead hazardous waste site, or a privately-owned treatment facility. The results of the demonstration will be evaluated by EPA using a set of predetermined criteria including performance, cost, and reliability relative to conventional technologies.

Community relations activities typically will be conducted during all phases of a SITE demonstration project. Demonstration projects will usually take place at locations where the Regional Superfund Community Relations Coordinator has already conducted community interviews, completed a site specific community relations plan, and established an information repository(ies) in the local community.

When a site is being screened for a SITE technology demonstration, but before a tentative selection has been made, the Community Relations Coordinator should assess the likely community concerns to help the Remedial Project Manager determine the potential feasibility. Prior to tentative site selection there should be no discussion of the possible demonstration with members of the community.

Once a tentative match has been made between a site and a technology, the lead agency should solicit public comment on the match. The requirements for this are identical to public comment opportunities on the remedial action, feasibility study and proposed plan. A site-specific demonstration fact sheet should be distributed to the information repository and site mailing list, and a notice published in a major local newspaper. At least one information briefing/public meeting for the community is strongly suggested after tentative site selection and/or during the comment period. If such meeting(s) occur during the comment period, transcripts of comments submitted at the meeting should be made. After comments have been received, the Community Relations Coordinator and On-Scene Coordinator/Remedial Project Manager (OSC/RPM) should prepare a responsiveness summary addressing each comment and the agency's response. On the basis of the responsiveness summary and the Region's recommendations, OSWER and ORD will make a decision on whether to proceed with the demonstration.

A demonstration plan will be prepared for each site which addresses all aspects of the demonstration. Once this plan is completed, the Community Relations Coordinator should coordinate with the OSC/RPM to determine whether a second public notice and an opportunity for a meeting and public comment period should be held. This step is optional but should be considered in cases with mixed community acceptance.

During the demonstration itself staff should be prepared for a likely increase in community interest. Activities such as workshops, briefings, community meetings, site tours, observation deck, on-scene information office, or an open house may be useful.

Once the demonstration at the site has been completed in accordance with the plan and schedule for the individual project, a complete evaluation of the innovative technology will be conducted by ORD. ORD will then prepare a final report and summary of the demonstration results. A public notice and/or a fact sheet will be prepared by the appropriate Regional office announcing the completion of the evaluation report and its availability in the information repository(ies). This public notice will be published in a local newspaper and mailed to individuals on the local mailing list for the site. Copies of the public notice, a summary of the demonstration results, and the final evaluation report must be placed in the information repository.

Alternative technologies may sometimes be used at sites that are not part of the formal SITE program. A SITE demonstration project could occur as part of the regular RI/FS process. In such cases, community relations requirements for remedial responses must be employed (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2).

CHAPTER 4

CONDUCTING COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAMS DURING REMEDIAL RESPONSES

This chapter provides guidance on conducting community relations programs during remedial responses. It covers all phases of a Superfund remedial response -- from the preliminary assessment and site investigation of a site to the post-cleanup phase when the remedial technology is operated and maintained. By explaining how to select activities for key points during remedial planning and remedial action, this chapter also serves as additional guidance for program design, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The remedial response can be a long, and sometimes complex process, particularly as the roles and responsibilities of various government agencies change throughout the response. Open and consistent communication with the community assures the public that their concerns have not been lost sight of, even as site responsibilities are transferred from one agency or work team to another. Open communication also helps the agency to move more quickly toward its goals of protecting human health and the environment. There are fewer "surprises" in a well-conducted community relations program, and, as a result, fewer delays in site remediation, as compared to a site where the agency and the community are not freely and frequently exchanging information.

This chapter is organized according to the following phases or milestones of a remedial action:

- Pre-Remedial Activities: Preliminary Assessment, Site Inspection, and the NPL Process;
- Remedial Investigation;
- Feasibility Study;
- End of Feasibility Study;
- Remedial Design;
- Remedial Action;
- Operation and Maintenance; and
- Deletion from NPL.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of accommodating plans for community relations to unanticipated developments. In discussing each phase, the chapter considers the types of issues and concerns likely to arise and suggests approaches or activities that may be useful. The various types of community relations activities recommended in this chapter are described individually in greater detail in Appendix A. Suggestions for community relations programs during enforcement actions are presented in Chapter 6.

4.1 COMMUNITY RELATIONS BEFORE REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION

Community concern about a hazardous waste site may exist long before the nature and extent of contamination are known and the site is on the NPL, and hence eligible for a remedial action. In some cases, the community may initiate the remedial process by alerting local, State, or Federal officials to problems at a nearby site. In other cases, the community may be unaware of the potential risks posed by a site, or the reasons why the State or EPA is gathering information about the site.

Ultimately, the kinds of community relations activities that are conducted at sites before a remedial investigation will depend on the nature of the site problem, available resources, and other competing claims for these resources. Staff should therefore consider carefully whether organized community relations activities are warranted at a pre-remedial site. As a general rule of thumb, resources are appropriately directed to sites where risk to the population is suspected to be high, and/or where public interest is already demonstrated. Similarly, calls or letters from local officials may be taken as another indication that community relations resources may be productively directed to the site.

4.1.1 Community Relations During Preliminary Assessment

EPA, often with contractor assistance, or the State, conducts the preliminary assessment of a site. Preliminary assessments are limited in scope, generally involving a review of site records, permits, pathway and target data, or titles to establish past activities at the site (e.g., wastes produced or disposed) and the need for further investigation. A preliminary assessment does not usually require an on-site visit or sampling. As a result, there is little need for organized community relations activities, or large-scale efforts to inform the community of the government's interest in the site. Formal activities are, in fact, not recommended at this stage, because they can generate unrealistic expectations in the community about the government's future involvement at the site.

It is nevertheless important during this phase for staff to become aware of community attitudes toward the site. At this stage in the remedial process, the people most likely to be aware of potential site problems and interested in eventual government response actions are local officials: the mayor, city council members, the public health chief, the public works chief, and members of local planning boards. Therefore, one of the first actions staff could take is to telephone State and local officials, the office of the area Congressman, and key citizens who can provide information about the scope and history of the problem. If technical staff will be gathering information directly from local officials or the community, community relations staff may wish to inform them beforehand of the purpose of any calls or visits from government officials. Community relations staff could also advise technical staff on how best to obtain the most pertinent information from these initial contacts with the community. If the preliminary assessment involves an on-site visit, it may be helpful for a community relations specialist to accompany the field investigator to the site. In all cases, staff should ensure that any local individuals contacted understand the purpose and possible outcomes of the preliminary assessment. Such explanations are best provided informally and directly, through telephone calls to the appropriate individuals.

Staff should also keep informed about the results of the preliminary assessment, in order to plan any follow-up contacts with the community. If the results of the preliminary assessment indicate that there is no need for a site inspection, key community officials should be so informed. If, on the other hand, a site inspection is planned, local officials should be advised that the site is slated for further government investigation and the approximate schedule.

4.1.2 Community Relations During Site Inspection

Site inspections, by definition, involve one or more visits to a site by State or EPA field teams to evaluate the hazards posed by the site. The purpose of the site inspection is to gather further information to determine if the site should be placed on the NPL or a removal action should be taken.

Because a site receiving an inspection is one step closer to a possible NPL listing and remedial investigation, community interest in the site may increase. It may be advisable to step up community relations efforts accordingly or initiate community relations activities if not yet begun. Staff responsible for community relations should obtain the schedule of all field activities to be conducted by EPA contractors (e.g., the Field Investigation Team, the Technical Assistance Team, and the Technical Enforcement Support Team). In coordination with technical staff, they may want to prepare the community beforehand for any on-site visits by technical work teams. The individuals who might be contacted include:

- Local officials;
- Heads of community organizations;
- Citizens who have indicated concerns to local, State or Federal officials;
- People who live closest to the site;
- Principals of schools near the site;
- Local businesses near the site; and
- Potentially responsible parties.

Such advance notice can help to prevent alarm about the appearance of government officials and contractor teams at the site.

It is particularly important, however, to keep communication with the community low-key and direct during the site inspection. The local community and officials should be made to understand that the site inspection is not itself evidence of a confirmed problem, but rather an information-gathering effort. A brief generic fact sheet is one way to provide the community with this information. The fact sheet could explain the purpose of the site inspection and its possible outcomes: i.e., proposal of the site for the NPL, placement of the site in a "no further remedial action planned" category, or deferral of the site to another program to address concerns.

Without raising the community's expectations of long-term government action at the site, community relations staff might nevertheless consider ways to lay the groundwork for later site activities. A few simple steps, taken during the site inspection phase, can go a long way in building community trust, and can save considerable time in developing a community relations program for the site, should an RI/FS be scheduled. Such steps might include:

- Identifying key community leaders and organizations that should be contacted during community interviews;
- Developing a mailing list of concerned citizens; and
- Designating an agency contact person who can answer questions from the community.

Community relations staff should follow-up with the community after the site inspection has been completed to explain the results of the site inspection. In many cases, the results of site sampling and scoring take many months to process; the time lag between the site inspection and the decision to proceed with an RI may lead to considerable uncertainty and frustration. Letters, or periodic phone calls, may help reassure local officials and the public that their site has not been lost in bureaucratic processing. In all circumstances, the community should be notified when a decision is made about further investigation of the site. Local officials and interested public should hear such news directly from the agency, rather than through the media.

4.1.3 Community Relations During the NPL Listing Process

The NCP sets forth three mechanisms for establishing priorities among releases and potential releases for purposes of the NPL: the Hazard Ranking System (HRS); designation by the States of their top priority releases; and determination that a site poses a significant threat to public health or welfare. Once EPA has identified a site or sites to be included on the NPL, the Agency proposes in the Federal Register to place the site(s) on the NPL and requests public comment for a period of 60 days. After consideration of all public comments, revisions are made, and the final rule is published in the Federal Register, not less than 30 days prior to its effective date.

Staff should anticipate increased community concern or interest when a site is placed on the NPL. To meet this increased need, staff might distribute a fact sheet that describes the site, outlines the NPL process, and explains the time frame for a site proposed for the NPL to be added to the final NPL. The fact sheet should also describe how the interested public can submit comments on the proposed listing. In addition, a public meeting might be held to provide the community with the opportunity to comment orally. The formal rule-making also attracts the media's attention; thus, it may be useful to prepare a press release to accompany fact sheets distributed to the media.

4.2 COMMUNITY RELATIONS DURING REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION/ FEASIBILITY STUDY

Community relations efforts become critical once a site is scheduled for a long-term RI/FS. From the time that a workplan is prepared for the RI/FS, to its completion, staff should schedule regular activities to:

- Obtain information from and learn the community's perspective on site problems and hazards;
- Ensure that the community is kept up-to-date about the activities, progress, and results of the RI/FS; and
- Provide the community with any background information or technical explanations necessary to understand the significance of the RI results and FS analysis.

4.2.1 Community Relations During Remedial Investigation

Once RI/FS work on a site has been scheduled, staff should prepare a site mailing list and designate an agency contact, if these steps have not already been taken during the pre-remedial phase. Community interviews, should be conducted as described in Chapter 3. These interviews are held primarily to gather information on the public's past and current involvement with the site to prepare a CRP. It is appropriate to assure interviewees that they will hear of future site activities as soon as agency plans are made, and to ask them how they would like to be involved in the process.

During community interviews, staff should establish information repositories where site documents will be made available to the public and identify locations for public meetings. When an information repository is established, it is advisable to inform the public in some way of the location and availability of the documents. When an administrative record is established, a public notice must be placed in a major, local newspaper of general circulation. These notifications may be done together. Meetings may be held and information repositories set-up in centrally-located public buildings; libraries, schools, community centers, or municipal buildings are often convenient and accessible locations. Staff should consider the accessibility and convenience of these locations to the physically-handicapped: Are there ramps for wheelchairs? Are the rooms well-lighted for the visually impaired?

When the draft RI workplan and community relations plan is completed, a public briefing or other forum is often scheduled to explain the plans. At sites where interest is limited, a press release could be issued, including information on where copies of the workplan (and subsequent site documents) can be obtained. "Kick-off" fact sheets can be distributed early in the RI to describe technical activities planned during the RI/FS, announce the location of the information repositories, and inform the public of the community relations plan. If plans for site activities change or schedules are delayed during the RI, local officials and the community should be notified.

Throughout the RI/FS process, efforts should be made to seek and use the public's input. Staff might want to hold small workshops during the RI/FS to solicit public opinion on technical issues. When the RI is completed and placed in the administrative record file, staff should arrange informal meetings with community members and local officials to discuss RI findings and progress on the FS. Briefings and workshops should be scheduled if high levels of concern are anticipated.

To a certain extent, the structure of a community relations program (e.g. the timing and schedule for activities) will always be dictated by the technical progress at the site, because information becomes available and opportunities for public input are often greatest when the various technical phases are completed. Nevertheless, the content of a program should be determined at all times by the nature of community concern. Community interest does not necessarily proceed in step with technical progress. Often there are demands for discussion and information before all the technical issues are resolved.

4.2.2 Community Relations During Feasibility Study

Public concern commonly intensifies during the RI/FS stage of the remedial process. The public will be anxious to review the alternatives for cleaning up the site, and will generally have strong opinions about the technical adequacy of various alternatives. In some cases, the strength of their opinions will not have been anticipated by their earlier involvement at the site. Because of the large potential for conflict at this time, it is vital for a strong community relations effort to accompany the development of cleanup alternatives during the RI/FS and the selection of alternatives.

Among the community relations activities and techniques suggested during the development of the RI/FS are:

- Informal meetings with the public, local officials, or PRPs before and during the development of the RI/FS, along with briefings and workshops;
- News releases, fact sheets, and publicly available progress reports that explain the progress and conclusions of the RI/FS;
- Updates of materials in the information repository and/or administrative record; and
- Open house to listen informally to public concerns and answer individual questions.

Staff will need to make the decision as to which of these or other suggested activities are appropriate during the RI/FS.

4.3 COMMUNITY RELATIONS AT THE COMPLETION OF REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION/ FEASIBILITY STUDY

The decision-making process following the lead agency's release of the remedial investigation/feasibility study and proposed plan is a point of intensive community relations activity. The preceding community relations efforts prepare a community for their involvement in this step. It is critical for the lead agency to actively reach out to inform the local public and receive comments on all remedial alternatives under consideration in the detailed analysis of the RI/FS, the agency's preferred alternative, the rationale for that preference, and any proposed waivers to §121(d) to cleanup standards. These activities should occur throughout the public comment period.

SARA §113 and §117 have specific public participation requirements at this point. Other activities are under discussion at this time. Please refer to Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: The Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for further guidance. Activities include at a minimum:

- **Developing a proposed plan**, a document prepared for public comment which summarizes the remedial alternatives presented in the detailed analysis of the RI/FS, identifies the preferred alternative, provides the rationale for that preferred alternative, identifies any proposed waivers to cleanup standards and the support agency's comments.

- **Publication of a public notice of the availability of the proposed plan and remedial investigation/ feasibility study, a brief summary of the proposed plan and announcement of a comment period.** This should be done preferably through a display advertisement purchased in a major local newspaper of general circulation.

- **Providing the opportunity for submission of both oral and written comments**. The 1985 NCP requires this formal comment period to be not less than 21 days. The proposed revisions to the NCP may suggest extending this to not less than 30 calendar days.

- **Providing the opportunity for a public meeting**. The agency must provide a transcript of all formal public meetings held pursuant to §117(a) of CERCLA during the public comment period. The transcripts must be kept and made available to the public in the administrative record, and may also be distributed in repositories and on request.

- **Preparing a responsiveness summary, which summarizes significant public comments and the agency's response which becomes a part of the ROD.** It also documents how the agency considered public comments throughout the decision-making process.

- **Publication of a newspaper notice which informs the public that the ROD is signed and of the availability of the final remedial action plan selected by the agency.** This notice, preferably a display ad, must be placed in a major local newspaper of general circulation after the remedy has been selected and the ROD signed, but before commencement of any remedial action.

While it is not required, distribution of the proposed plan (and FS fact sheet, if applicable) to the entire site mailing list and any other interested parties is highly recommended. In addition, all items developed, received, published, or made available to the public pursuant to §117 of CERCLA must be made part of the administrative record for the site. It is also recommended that copies be placed in information repositories at or near the site.

4.3.1 Proposed Plan

The proposed plan, as required in §117(a), is a critical part of remedy selection and the administrative record, which should reflect the decision-making by the lead and support agencies. Staff should consult Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: The Proposed Plan and Record of Decision (ROD Guidance) for information concerning the proper development of proposed plans. The following section will provide a brief summary of the discussion contained in the ROD Guidance.

The proposed plan can be presented in different formats. The formats are discussed in the guidance mentioned above. It is important to remember that, whatever form is used, it is a document whose purpose is to inform the public and should be written in a clear and concise style. Illustrations and figures should be used where appropriate to better summarize the information in the RI/FS.

It is recommended that preparation of the proposed plan be a joint effort of the site team. The Remedial Project Manager, Community Relations Coordinator and Regional Counsel should coordinate to ensure that the proposed plan is technically accurate, satisfies statutory requirements, and provides the public with all necessary information in a clear and concise style for the lay reader.

In addition to clearly summarizing the alternatives from the detailed analysis in the RI/FS, the proposed plan must specify the preferred alternative. It is also important to clearly discuss the rationale for the preference utilizing the evaluation criteria, as identified in the ROD Guidance. The proposed plan should notify the public of all opportunities to obtain additional information and submit comments (e.g. information repositories/administrative record, RI/FS report, public meetings, contact person, etc.).

The proposed plan is a key part of remedial selection which should reflect the decision-making by the lead and support agencies. The lead agency will seek the support agency's comments on the proposed plan prior to it being made available to the public (§121(f)(g)). The proposed plan should include a discussion of whether the support agency agrees with the proposed plan; or, when the support agency does not agree, a discussion of the support agency's comments on the preferred alternative should be summarized.

Another requirement of the proposed plan is to present a discussion of any waivers [SARA §121(d)(4)] of applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements that would be invoked if the preferred alternative (or other alternative) was implemented.

The presentation of the preferred alternative should make clear that the agency has not made a decision in regard to the preferred alternative and is open to suggestions on how the preferred alternative or the other alternatives might be modified to better satisfy the remedial objectives of the site. In other words, the proposed plan should make clear that public comments are encouraged on all alternatives, not just the preferred alternative. It is important to note that changes to the preferred alternative or a shift from the preferred alternative to another may be made if public comments and/or additional data indicate that these modifications are warranted.

4.3.2 Newspaper Notice

The advertisement published in the newspaper should include sufficient information to provide a brief summary of the proposed plan and inform the public of their opportunity to comment on the RI/FS and proposed plan. The notice should describe the alternatives analyzed and identify the preferred alternative. It should also tell how to submit oral and written comments, provide the location of the information repositories and administrative record, name a contact person and how to reach him or her, and provide the opportunity for a public meeting or state the time and place of a public meeting. It is suggested that the announcement should occur at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the public comment period so that the public have sufficient time to obtain and read the document. (See ROD Guidance for more information and a sample notice.)

In keeping with the objectives of SARA and to reach as broad an audience as possible, it is suggested that the advertisement should be a display and designed to attract attention and engage the reader. The agency should consider purchasing ad space in the most widely read section of the newspaper.

4.3.3 Public Comment Period

The public comment period offers special community relations challenges and opportunities. It can also make a large contribution to the quality of the selected remedial alternative. Community relations staff, in coordination with technical and/or enforcement personnel, should maintain communication with local officials and interested community members, explain the remedial alternatives in understandable terms, and solicit public input. If this is effectively done, concerned groups and individuals can see that their interests are receiving serious consideration. This should make a significant difference in the acceptability of the final remedy. It may be appropriate to extend the public comment period beyond the three-week minimum in response to citizen requests. In fact, EPA expects to propose extending the comment period to no less than 30 calendar days in the 1988 revision of the NCP.

The lead agency is required to provide an opportunity for a public meeting at or near the site regarding the RI/FS and proposed plan. The community relations staff may also choose to conduct a formal public hearing, although this is neither required nor always encouraged. Public hearings, in which concerned individuals formally state their comments but no agency response is given, are primarily a vehicle for the public to get comments on the record, rather than establishing a dialogue with the community. If a request for a hearing is received, staff should inquire as to why the hearing has been requested. It may be that the public's needs can be met in a more informal, productive and less resource-intensive manner. It is preferable to use hearings in conjunction with small informal meetings and the other communications techniques mentioned above.

SARA also requires the lead agency to provide a reasonable opportunity for submission of written and oral comments. The lead agency must keep a transcript of the public meeting conducted during the public comment period, pursuant to §117(a) and make the transcripts part of the administrative record placed at a site information repository available for review and copying. Such transcripts serve as records for consideration of oral comments received during meetings. Further substantive discussions regarding the proposed plan, RI/FS and proposed waivers received by other means such as telephone calls or meetings with individuals during the public comment period, should also be documented. This may be done through a record of communication, tapes, or notes which must be placed in the administrative record. Agency representatives should also urge commenters to put their thoughts in writing to ensure they are fully reflected in the record.

4.3.4 Addressing Significant Changes Prior to Adoption of the Final Remedial Action Plan

After issuance of the proposed plan and prior to the adoption of the final remedy in the ROD, if new information is made available that significantly changes the basic features of the remedy as originally presented in the RI/FS and proposed plan with respect to the scope, performance, and cost, the lead agency shall be required to document those changes in the ROD. SARA §117(a) requires additional public comment if those changes are not reasonable extensions of the information presented in the RI/FS and proposed plan. Please consult the Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: The Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for further guidance on the community relations requirements and recommendations in this circumstance.

4.3.5 Addressing Post-ROD Significant Changes

After adoption of a final remedial action plan or ROD, if any remedial action is taken, or any enforcement action under §106 is taken, or if any settlement or consent decree under §106 or §122 is entered into, and if such action, settlement, or decree differs in any significant respects from the final plan, the lead agency shall publish an explanation of differences and the reasons such changes were made. Refer to the Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: The Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for guidance on the community relations activities that will be required and recommended in such circumstances.

4.3.6 Responsiveness Summaries

At the end of the public comment period, the lead agency's staff must prepare a responsiveness summary. The responsiveness summary is submitted as part of the ROD package that is reviewed and signed by Agency decision-makers. Once the ROD has been signed, the responsiveness summary is made available to the public as part of the ROD.

The responsiveness summary serves two functions: first, to provide the decision-maker with information about the views of the community and potentially responsible parties regarding the proposed remedial action and any alternatives. Secondly, it documents how public comments have been considered during the decision-making process and provides answers to major comments raised.

A responsiveness summary, in order to serve these purposes, should be a concise and complete summary of significant comments from the public including the potentially responsible parties and the agency's response to these comments. It should be simple, straightforward and readable. It should include, by way of summary categories, references to all significant comments, criticisms, and new data received and the agency's position on each issue. It should not be a point-by-point recitation of each comment. For example, potentially responsible parties and other members of the public may submit very detailed and technical comments that require lengthy responses. It may be advisable to prepare those responses in one document which is placed in the administrative record and repository(ies), then summarize those responses in the responsiveness summary. The responsiveness summary also should state where the detailed response is available for public review. Each written or documented comment is included in the administrative record and, in this way, available for public review.

As discussed in the ROD guidance, it is recommended that the responsiveness summary be divided into four sections:

1. **Overview**. The first section should describe the selected remedy and any changes as compared to the alternatives presented in the proposed plan, feasibility study, and any new alternatives suggested by the public which the agency had not previously considered. The level of community support for the agency's preferred

alternative should be discussed and compared with the level of support for other alternatives.

2. **Background on Community Involvement**. The second section should provide a brief history of community interest in the site and should identify key public issues. Major modifications in the preceding investigation, operable units, or removal actions which were the result of public comment and concern should be noted. A listing of community relations activities conducted to date may be included as an attachment to the responsiveness summary.

3. **Summary of Comments Received and Agency Responses**. This section should include a summary of comments received from all interested parties, including citizens' groups or individuals in the community, the community's technical advisors, potentially responsible parties, and local officials. Included within each category of comments should be the lead agency's response. Possible categories or subsections might include technical comments, concerns regarding alternative remedies, public participation process, cost, etc. Comments received during the public comment period, as well as significant concerns raised over the course of the site history relating to the remedy selection should be included. Substantive comments received after the close of the comment period also should be included to the extent practicable. Significant community concerns which will not, and can not, be addressed by an agency because of lack of jurisdiction or other aspects which would make any agency action inappropriate, should be noted with an explanation of why no agency action will occur.

4. **Remedial Design/Remedial Action Concerns**. This final section should describe public concerns raised during the RI/FS and public comment period, (e.g. air monitoring during construction) which have to do with the remedial action. This will keep EPA alert to community concerns during this stage of the process.

The responsiveness summary is part of the ROD. However, it should be written as an independent section which can stand alone to document public concerns and how they are addressed. The responsiveness summary will be submitted to the lead and support agency decision-makers for consideration, and, after ROD approval, to the public. The ROD (with the responsiveness summary) will be placed in the administrative record file and other information repositories. In addition, the responsiveness summary may be distributed to all those who commented and to the entire site mailing list.

The lead agency receives comments from the public throughout the remedial process. The agency has no obligation to respond to these comments before the public comment period on the RI/FS and proposed plan, it is agency practice to respond to them as quickly as possible. These comments should be documented in some way such as a record of communication and placed in the administrative record file. The agency should also incorporate such significant comments into the responsiveness summary on the RI/FS and proposed plan.

Because of the wide-ranging nature of comments, addressing technical, legal, financial, and public or private due process concerns, preparation of the responsiveness summary is a team effort under the direction of the RPM. The lead agency community relations staff is usually given responsibility for coordinating this effort because the responsiveness summary is the primary means of documenting community involvement in the decision-making process. Therefore, contractor support for the responsiveness summary is normally a community relations activity in the SCAP. However, with growing technical sophistication of the community, technical advisors, and technical comments from the PRPs, these efforts also require substantial additional funding in the SCAP for the technical support contractor, and may require further involvement of the technical and legal staff to respond to questions.

4.4 COMMUNITY RELATIONS BEFORE AND DURING REMEDIAL DESIGN

Moving from the FS to remedial design is a major step in the remedial response. The focus in site activity shifts from remedial planning to actual cleanup. Roles and responsibilities at the site also change, as the Army Corps of Engineers or PRPs may take the lead on actual site work. Furthermore, responsibility for the site may shift from EPA to the State. Given these major changes, the community may need assurance that its concerns will continue to be addressed in the subsequent phases of the remedial action.

In the early stages of remedial design, the community relations plan should be revised to address any new or changing community concerns since the RI/FS. If local concerns have remained relatively unaltered, the revision may be limited to providing a new section on future community relations activities and schedule, with minor changes or updates in other sections. These additions may be based on a few informal discussions either by telephone or in person with selected, informed individuals who clearly represent the community. If community attitudes towards the remedial action have changed considerably, the plan may need to be substantially rewritten. In such cases, it is suggested that community interviews be held prior to the revision of the plan. Interviews may range from formal question and answer formats conducted with several citizens about many aspects of the site to informal discussions. These are site-specific decisions that must be made by the lead agency, with input by the support agency, using its judgment as to what types and number of discussions are appropriate to develop a CRP that will enhance the response action.

One objective of revising the plan is to evaluate community relations efforts to that point. Staff therefore should review all community relations activities held during the RI/FS and consider which activities were effective and which were not. Based on this evaluation, the revised plan should project community relations activities for remedial action and design that have already been demonstrated to be successful at a particular site.

In revising the plan, staff also should be alert to particular issues that might emerge during the remedial design and action. Even though the public has had the opportunity to comment on the FS, some members of the public may not agree with the selected remedial action. It is important to be sensitive to such disagreements and to identify ways in which these and other public concerns can best be addressed during the remedial design. Community involvement at this stage also can help staff design factors such as the construction of traffic routes and work schedules to minimize impact on the community.

During the RI/FS many changes may have occurred; there may have been resignations, elections, deaths, arrivals, and departures in the community. Therefore, all lists of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of local citizens, officials, and institutions should be updated when the plan is revised.

When the final engineering design is near completion, EPA policy provides that staff notify the public. At this point, staff should prepare a fact sheet explaining the engineering design. Notification of the design fact sheet may be accomplished with a notice in a local newspaper, mailing the fact sheet to those on the mailing list, or other technique best suited to the affected community and interested parties.

At this stage, the public might be surprised to learn how long the cleanup will take. Moreover, after a lengthy RI/FS and the promise of an extended cleanup process, the public may anticipate that the site will ultimately be restored to its original condition. Some may expect that all risks at the site will be eliminated. Staff can help the public appreciate that while full cleanup is the exception rather than the rule, the site will be cleaned up to levels that are considered safe and are consistent with applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements of other Federal and State environmental laws **(28)**. A review of Superfund objectives and constraints at this stage could be very useful.

4.5 COMMUNITY RELATIONS DURING REMEDIAL ACTION

With the remedial action, site activity increases as construction of the selected remedy begins. Although the engineering design should have been explained in a fact sheet distributed to the community before the remedial action, residents may still have questions about the actual construction. If site conditions permit, site tours can be conducted to enable community members to better understand the nature of the problem at the site and the response action under construction. If site access is restricted, a pictorial display posted at a local library or in the information repository allows the community to view the progress at the site.

While there are no formal community relations requirements during the remedial action, staff should ensure that the community is kept informed of the schedule of site activities, changes in the remedial action schedule, and any new findings at the site. Effective tools for keeping the public and local officials informed include periodic updates to describe progress at the site, press releases announcing site developments or changes in the schedule of events, and informal meetings or public availability sessions to allow the community to meet with agency staff to discuss site issues.

4.6 COMMUNITY RELATIONS DURING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Under CERCLA, States are responsible for operating and maintaining site remedies once the remedial action has been completed. Thus, at this point in the remedial process, all Fund-lead sites effectively become State-lead sites. However, according to EPA's guidance on "State Participation in the Superfund Remedial Program" **(33)** and the March 26, 1986 "Draft Addendum to January 17, 1986 Guidance, CERCLA Funding of State Oversight of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)" **(21)**, the State may obtain EPA funding and assistance for up to one year after remedial action to ensure that the remedy is operational and functional through a cooperative agreement. These agreements also establish lead responsibility for community relations activities. After this one year period, States have responsibility for community relations activities for both State-lead and Fund-lead sites for the duration of operation and maintenance (O&M).

Community relations efforts during the O&M phase are likely to be less intense than in the earlier phases of a remedial response when public concerns were more strongly felt and expressed. However, public concerns do not necessarily vanish with the signing of the ROD. The public may continue to have health concerns, or questions about site safety or long-term use of the site. Hence, those responsible for community relations at the site should continue efforts to monitor community concerns, exchange information, and, where appropriate, meet with community residents to discuss their concerns.

When the remedial response shifts from remedial action to O&M, certain events can be anticipated:

- Planned and unplanned shutdowns. Planned shutdowns will occur whenever it is necessary to clean and adjust equipment. To prevent the public from becoming alarmed that a new danger has been discovered at the site, they should be informed well in advance concerning maintenance shut-down schedules. Unplanned shutdowns due to equipment failure and extraneous events such as a labor strike will be especially dismaying to those living near the site. They may fear a new danger at the site. Again, the public should be immediately informed by the lead agency what is happening.

- Changes in the appearance of the work site due to weather conditions. If, for example, the weather suddenly becomes much cooler, the water vapor above an air stripping tower may condense into a visible plume. Some citizens may fear that an explosion has occurred. To prevent or allay these fears, it is advisable to tell people in advance what to expect.

- Increased civic awareness that the site will not always be a Superfund site, but may be restored to other uses within the community. To some citizens, the departure of agency staff and contractors from the site may be as upsetting as their arrival. Staff should therefore ensure that the community understands the long-term plans for the site and knows which State and local officials will be ultimately responsible.

4.7 COMMUNITY RELATIONS DURING THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL) DELETION PROCESS

A site can be deleted from the NPL by meeting one of three criteria, as discussed in 2.4. Procedures for site deletion from the NPL are similar to rule-making for NPL site additions. According to draft "Guidance on Deletion of Sites from the National Priorities List (NPL)"**(25)**, Regional staff should prepare a deletion docket containing all pertinent information supporting the deletion recommendation before a deletion recommendation is transmitted to Headquarters. The Regional public docket and local information repositories should contain complete copies of all supporting information prior to publication of public notification statements announcing EPA's intent to propose a site deletion.

Public notification statements are prepared by Regional staff. The Notice of Intent to Delete will appear in the Federal Register and appropriate local publications. Additional information provided in the notice should include:

- Summary of EPA deletion criteria and how the site meets the criteria;

- Location of Regional dockets;

- Location of local information repositories containing relevant documents for community review;

- Name and address of a Regional contact where comments may be sent;

- Brief site history (including location, former use, type of contaminants, and date of inclusion on the NPL);

- Description of all response actions taken at the site (including scope of RI, if applicable, general results, and conclusions);
- Specification of cleanup standards and criteria and results of all confirmatory sampling;
- Summary of Superfund community relations activities;
- Description of EPA's close-out plan for the site, explaining operation and maintenance procedures and the monitoring program that will be implemented;
- Acknowledgement of State concurrence to delete the site; and
- Statement indicating that EPA retains the authority to spend money on a deleted site if future conditions warrant such actions.

A responsiveness summary that documents comments received on the Notice of Intent to Delete and EPA responses to the comments should be prepared to support a deletion recommendation. This responsiveness summary should describe:

- Community relations activities conducted during the remedial planning and action stages of the cleanup;
- Comments received during the comment periods;
- Comments received during public meetings (if held);
- Comments from settlement-related comment periods (if appropriate);
- EPA responses to national and local public comments; and
- Justification for proceeding with the deletion (if public comments indicate strong disagreement with the recommendation).

Following approval of the Regional Administrator, a copy of the responsiveness summary should be included in the Regional docket and published as part of the final rule.

4.8 COPING WITH UNANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS

Ideally, community relations plans would anticipate all likely community concerns and identify appropriate community relations activities accordingly.

In reality, unanticipated developments commonly occur. The effectiveness of the community relations program at each site will depend on how well such unforeseen occurrences are managed. While by definition it is not possible to plan directly for unanticipated developments, each community relations program should have sufficient resources and flexibility to respond to these situations. For example, if an environmental group suddenly begins picketing at a site where there has been no prior community involvement, agency officials may want to meet with representatives of the group and demonstrate the agency's willingness to consider community concerns. Similarly, if agency officials discover significantly greater contamination than anticipated at a site, community relations and/or technical staff should meet with affected citizens, prepare statements, hold informal meetings concerning the new findings, and conduct press briefings.

As these examples suggest, agency efforts to address unanticipated developments will be most effective if community relations and technical staff respond as soon as possible. Good crisis management is crucial to the effectiveness of any public involvement program. Staff confronted with unanticipated developments should seek vigorously to pursue general community relations program goals: listen to and consider community concerns, and keep citizen and local officials accurately informed about site activities.

4.9 SUMMARY

Exhibit 4-1 summarizes community relations activities that are suggested for each stage of a remedial response. (Exhibit 2-1 in Chapter 2 displays required activities during remedial response.) These suggested activities may or may not be useful at any given site. The decision whether to conduct any, some, or all of these activities will depend ultimately on site-specific factors such as level of technical activity, or perceived or real degree of risk present at the site. Some sites may not require extensive briefings or numerous public meetings, while others may require regular consultation with community members and frequent releases of information. Each community relations program should be site-specific and reflect the needs and suggestions of individual communities. Appendix A describes in more detail the activities recommended in this chapter.

EXHIBIT 4-1

SUGGESTED COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTIVITIES DURING REMEDIAL RESPONSE[1]

Technical Phase	Suggested Activities
1) Preliminary Assessment	o Technical staff brief community relations staff on the site o Community relations staff brief technical staff on community issues o Telephone local officials and concerned community members
2) Site Inspection	o Telephone local officials and concerned community members o Hold small, informal meetings with community members o Distribute fact sheet describing site inspection procedures and possible outcomes o Prepare mailing list o Designate an agency contact
3) Before RI	o Notify public of availability of information repository o Technical staff brief community relations staff on scope of RI work plan o Hold public meeting to present the Superfund process and the final RI/FS work plan o Community relations staff brief technical staff on information gathered during community interviews
4) During the RI	o Distribute a "kickoff" fact sheet o Maintain telephone contact with key community representatives o Conduct workshop on the Superfund program o Notify interested parties of delays or lags in site activity o Hold meetings with the community to discuss RI findings

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[1] Suggested activities should be undertaken in conjunction with requirements specified in Exhibit 2-1.

EXHIBIT 4-1 (continued)

SUGGESTED COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTIVITIES DURING REMEDIAL ACTIONS

Technical Phase	Suggested Activities
5) During the FS	o Maintain telephone contact with key community representatives o Solicit public comments on criteria for evaluating and screening FS alternatives
6) Completion of the FS and Proposed Plan	o Distribute fact sheet and/or letters to the community on the CRP mailing list o Issue news releases o Inform those on mailing list that the RI/FS and proposed plan are available for public review and comment
7) Remedial Design	o Evaluate effectiveness of past community relations activities o Distribute fact sheets explaining remedial design o Brief Corps of Engineers on community relations
8) Remedial Action	o Hold small meetings or open houses to explain the remedial technology o Conduct site tours o Prepare an exhibit showing a pictorial history of the site
9) Operation and Maintenance (O&M)	o Publish maintenance schedules o Prepare fact sheets explaining O&M procedures o Hold meetings with the interested public to encourage local responsibility for the site

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DURING REMOVAL ACTIONS

(Reserved)

This chapter is reserved for discussion of community relations activities during removal actions. The National Contingency Plan requires community relations activities at a removal site if the action extends or is anticipated to extend beyond 45 days. The proposed NCP may state this will be changed to 120 days. The Emergency Response Division (ERD) and community relations personnel at EPA Headquarters are examining the specific community relations needs for removals. Appendix G summarizes the proposed NCP requirements for community relations.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY RELATIONS REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

This chapter is being revised to reflect procedures for compiling administrative records. The revised chapter will be circulated for Regional comment in June 1988.

CHAPTER 7

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

(Reserved)

Superfund reauthorization legislation provides for technical assistance grants to citizen groups at Superfund sites. These grants will enable affected citizens to obtain expert advice in reviewing and assessing technical information produced during work at a remedial site. Once EPA develops guidance and regulations for the implementation of technical assistance grants, this chapter will be completed.

CHAPTER 8

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Superfund response actions commonly require the participation of several government agencies at the Federal, State, and local levels. Depending on site-specific factors, EPA, another Federal agency, or a designated State environmental agency, may be responsible for managing the response. Other Federal agencies, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or the Department of Justice, and their State counterparts, may also be vital contributors by providing legal, technical, and engineering support. An important community relations task at any Superfund site is the coordination by the lead agency of the community relations activities of these various agencies. The lead agency, as defined in §300.6 and §300.33 of the NCP is responsible for conducting community relations activities and ensuring that the requirements specified in Chapter 2 of this handbook are met. Effective coordination of community relations activities is vital to ensuring that:

- Public input is properly channeled to the appropriate government decision-makers; and

- The community receives accurate, timely, and consistent information, even when that information must come from a variety of sources.

This chapter discusses the roles and responsibilities of Federal, State, and local agencies for community relations at Superfund sites. These roles and responsibilities vary depending on site ownership and response status. This chapter focuses on the assignment of lead responsibility for community relations activities and on contributing roles. The discussion in previous chapters on recommended community relations activities for remedial and removal actions are generally applicable regardless of which agency has lead responsibility for community relations.

Lead responsibility for Superfund response efforts resides primarily with EPA. EPA may, however, work with another Federal agency through an interagency agreement (IAG), or a State through a State memorandum of agreement (SMOA) to conduct a remedial action. Through such agreements, EPA may delegate lead responsibility for a response at a particular site to a State or another agency, but still retain final authority over remedial action at that NPL site. CERCLA establishes a process by which States may enter into cooperative agreements or contracts with EPA and authorizes EPA to prescribe the terms and conditions of such agreements. SARA §120(e)(6) also authorizes EPA to enter into agreements with potentially responsible parties (PRPs) under §122 and using consent decrees to conduct RI/FSs or remedial actions at sites they leased on Federal facilities if EPA determines that such actions will be done properly and within the required deadlines.

8.1 FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCY ROLES IN SUPERFUND

Many Federal agencies may provide valuable scientific, technical, and managerial assistance to the lead agency in undertaking response efforts. For example:

- The Department of Agriculture (USDA) can provide expertise in managing agricultural, forest, and wilderness areas. Through the Soil Conservation Service, USDA can predict the effects of pollutants on soil and their movements over and through soil.
- The Department of Commerce (DOC), through the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), can provide scientific expertise on marine resources and habitats for which it is responsible; information on actual and predicted meteorological, hydrologic, ice, and oceanographic conditions for marine, coastal, and inland waters; and prediction of movement and dispersion of pollutants through trajectory modeling.
- The Department of Defense (DOD) provides assistance in responding to releases from DOD vessels or facilities and in managing Fund-lead remedial actions. Specifically, DOD officials serve as On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) for removal actions and as Remedial Project Managers (RPMs) for remedial actions resulting from releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants from DOD vessels and facilities. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) manages the remedial design and action phases of Fund-lead remedial actions.
- The Department of Energy (DOE) can help in identifying the source and extent of radioactive releases and in the removal and disposal of radioactive contamination.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is responsible for providing assistance on all matters related to the assessment of health hazards at a response and for the protection of the health of both response workers and the public.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides assistance on civil emergency planning (and may, in fact, assume the lead in managing a response when evacuation or relocation of residents and businesses is required).

- The Department of the Interior (DOI) offers expertise, through its several bureaus and offices, on the impacts of hazardous releases on wildlife, soils, vegetation, and surface and ground water.

- The Department of Justice (DOJ) represents the Federal government, including its agencies, in litigation.

- The Department of Transportation (DOT) provides expertise on all modes of transporting oil and hazardous substances. Through the United States Coast Guard (USCG), DOT offers support in responding to releases into coastal navigable waters of the U.S.

At State- and Federal-lead sites, the State counterparts of many of these Federal agencies also may provide valuable technical and managerial expertise such as providing information on ARARs as required by SARA. According to Appendix F of EPA guidance on "State Participation in the Superfund Remedial Program," **(33)** the coordination of the various State participants in a response action is a State responsibility. Therefore, a State, in its cooperative agreement, is expected to identify those agencies or entities that will participate in the response action, briefly describe the role of each, and agree to oversee their participation in close coordination with EPA.

Federal and State agencies have an additional role in the Superfund process as trustees of natural resources. For purposes of CERCLA, trustees are Federal or State governmental agencies and Indian tribes that have authority over the natural resource, and would include DOI, USDA, DOC, and State natural resource agencies.

Under SARA, EPA is required to notify trustees of potential natural resource damages resulting from releases and to coordinate with such trustees in performing assessments, investigations, and planning. (See NCP for further information.) Community relations staff should remain alert to the potential active involvement of trustee agencies in the response process so they can thoroughly explain the extent and purpose of such involvement to community residents.

Local governments may play an active role in community relations activities. In addition to being the recipients of information from Federal or State agencies, they may assist in distributing fact sheets and other community relations documents for public review. In addition, local officials are expected to provide input during the decision-making process.

8.2 FEDERALLY-OWNED FACILITIES

Several Federal agencies also own facilities at which hazardous wastes are or were disposed. Many Federally-owned facilities have been proposed for and placed on the NPL. While responses at these facilities are subject to CERCLA and NCP requirements, SARA further defines the process by which Federal agencies are to undertake remedial actions and provides for joint selection of the remedy by EPA and other Federal agencies. If there is disagreement, EPA must make the determination. SARA also notes that "No department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States may adopt or utilize any such guidelines, rules, regulations, or criteria which are inconsistent with the guidelines, rules, regulations, and criteria established by the Administrator under this Act" (§120(a)(2)). While Federal facilities may offer alternative methods for meeting community relations requirements, EPA must make the determination whether these alternatives are consistent with these rules, regulations, guidelines, and criteria.

Response actions at Federal facilities are to be conducted according to site-specific interagency agreements (IAGs) between EPA and the department, agency, or instrumentality that owns or operates the facility. In addition, the State is often involved in site-specific IAGs. The content and scope of such IAGs will be determined on a site-specific basis and the agreements will designate responsibility for community relations activities. Accordingly, it is possible that Federal agencies other than EPA will conduct community relations activities for response actions at Federal facilities. For non-NPL Federal facilities, State law applies to response actions; accordingly, community relations activities must be undertaken as required by State law. (More information on Federal facilities will appear in the final draft of this handbook.)

EPA also recognizes that Federal agencies may have their own community relations programs and guidance. However, SARA §120(a)(2) states that EPA guidelines, rules, regulations, and criteria are applicable to Federal agencies, and that Federal agencies may not adopt or utilize any guidelines, rules, regulations, or criteria which are inconsistent with those established by the EPA Administrator under CERCLA. This handbook provides Federal agencies with the guidance to more closely coordinate community relations efforts in the planning and implementation of their community relations programs to be consistent with CERCLA, the NCP, and EPA policies. EPA Regional offices should have close interaction with other Federal agencies to ensure that guidance is provided on a site-by-site basis.

8.3 INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AT FEDERAL-LEAD SITES

Other Federal and State agency staff may participate in community relations activities during a Federal-lead response. States may receive funds under a cooperative agreement for certain coordinating activities at Federal-lead sites, including community relations. The Regional community relations coordinator is responsible for coordination and oversight of community relations activities conducted by State or other agencies. (§300.39 of the NCP requires that any public information activities be approved by the on-scene coordinator or remedial project manager.) Two Federal agencies that may frequently contribute to Federal-lead responses, and therefore merit special attention in this context, are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is usually responsible for managing the remedial design and action phases of a Federal-lead remedial response and may also provide technical assistance to EPA during the RI/FS. Under the "Interagency Agreement Between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Executing CERCLA"**(4)**, however, EPA retains the lead responsibility for community relations and for interagency coordination at sites where COE is involved.

Under SARA, ATSDR is required to perform a health assessment at every site on the NPL. ATSDR also may perform health assessments on non-NPL sites in response to citizen petitions or under other circumstances. A health assessment combines site-specific risk assessment information developed by EPA during the RI/FS, with health data on people possibly affected by the site. In addition, ATSDR may issue health advisories at sites where ATSDR has determined that a significant threat to public health exists and may provide health-related assistance and technical advice to EPA when requested. ATSDR may jointly conduct some of its activities with other participating agencies of the Public Health Service and with State health departments. EPA retains the lead in conducting community relations activities at Superfund sites, but ATSDR may, at EPA's request, help conduct these activities.

8.4 INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AT STATE-LEAD SITES

The procedures for coordinating community relations activities at State-lead sites are analogous to those at Federal-lead sites. The State and its designated agencies have lead responsibility for planning and implementing the required community relations activities. EPA maintains oversight over State activities and, where there is a cooperative agreement, may provide assistance including actually conducting community relations activities. The State may submit a final CRP to EPA for review and approval. The State also may request funds for the development of a CRP in the cooperative agreement application. The State must prepare the CRP and have it approved by EPA before remedial investigation work begins.

CERCLA assigns States the responsibility for operating and maintaining site remedies after remedial action is completed. Thus, all Federal-lead sites effectively become State-lead sites following completion of remedial action. (On ground-water issues, see §104(c)(6) of SARA.) EPA's directive entitled "State Participation in the Superfund Remedial Program," however, allows for the State to request EPA funding and assistance for the first year of O&M through a cooperative agreement. During this initial period, lead responsibility for community relations activities at Federal-lead sites will be designated in the cooperative agreement for the site. States will maintain lead responsibility for community relations at State-lead sites during the initial O&M period and at all State-lead and Federal-lead sites for the duration of O&M.

8.5 INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AT ENFORCEMENT SITES

Cooperative agreements may also be established between EPA and the State at enforcement-lead sites. In general, if EPA negotiates the order with responsible parties, then EPA is designated as the lead agency for community relations. If the State negotiates the order, then the State will have the lead for community relations if there is an IAG. In this situation, EPA will provide oversight and States will be required to follow EPA community relations requirements outlined in Chapters 2 and 6. See "CERCLA Funding of State Oversight of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)"**(17)** and "Draft Addendum to January 17, 1986 Guidance, CERCLA Funding of State Oversight of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)."**(21)**

CHAPTER 9

ADMINISTRATION OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAMS

This chapter identifies the respective roles and responsibilities of EPA Headquarters, Regional Offices, and contractors in community relations activities. The suggestions in this chapter also are intended to aid staff in other Federal and State agencies determine responsibilities and identify areas where contractor support is appropriate. Supplemental guidance on management of community relations contractor support is currently being prepared. Until such guidance becomes available, staff are encouraged to call EPA Headquarters Remedial Planning and Response Branch with questions on contractor management.

9.1 THE ROLE OF HEADQUARTERS AND REGIONAL OFFICES

EPA Headquarters and Regional Office staff have distinct responsibilities for planning and implementation of a community relations program at a site. Headquarters is responsible for developing policy, guidance, and training programs, overseeing community relations implementation, evaluating programs, and analyzing resources. Further, Headquarters provides general informational materials on the Superfund program, national contract management, and other support for services that may be required in the field.

For EPA-lead responses, the Regional Offices are responsible for developing community relations plans and programs, conducting community interviews, developing site-specific public information materials, soliciting citizen input, issuing press releases, managing and supervising contractor support, and implementing community relations programs. The roles of EPA and the State for community relations in State-lead responses are specified in the cooperative agreement for a site or State memorandum of agreement (SMOA). Regional Offices may play an advisory or oversight role in the development and implementation of community relations, or may take full responsibility for the site program where a cooperative agreement or IAG exists.

9.2 APPROPRIATE TASKS FOR CONTRACTORS

Community relations contractors can provide support services for program activities in a number of situations. However, **one principle must be maintained throughout the program: contractors must never represent, or appear to speak for, the lead agency on policy issues before the public, other government officials, or the media**.

The community relations programs at individual sites will include many activities that can be supported by contractor staff. Some activities will involve routine assistance in daily or on-going site work; others will involve behind-the-scenes preparation; and still others may require specific expertise, such as presenting sampling results or discussing engineering plans. Contractors have been widely used for conducting community interviews and preparing community relations plans. Contractors are very useful for ensuring that technical information is accurate and understandable.

The amount of contractor assistance required, and the division of responsibility between the lead agency and contractor staff, will vary significantly from site to site. Staff needs to work closely with the contracts officer in delegating tasks to contractors regardless of the particular type or level of contractor support at a given site. Exhibit 9-1 illustrates appropriate responsibilities of contractor staff for several community relations activities.

9.3 MANAGING CONTRACTOR SUPPORT

For the community relations program at each site, the lead agency needs to determine the level of effort to apply and the corresponding financial resources. Factors used to determine the LOE include site priority, available time of contractor, balancing CRC workload and schedule for all community relations site activities. Accordingly, the extent of contractor support at a site will depend on the resources available as well as the level of community interest and the response action chosen.

Some factors to consider in determining contractor resource needs are:

- The number of contractor hours necessary to complete a task (including internal review);
- The extent of site-related administrative and management tasks (e.g., time sheets, monthly reports);
- Whether the task involves travel (i.e., airfare, local transport, and per diem costs); and
- Other direct costs, such as typesetting and printing of fact sheets and other reports; graphics; transcripts of meetings; newspaper advertisements; mailings to interested community members; express mailing costs; telephone services; and any temporary staff exclusive of typing support.

Because these factors will vary from site to site, the community relations coordinator and technical staff should meet early in the planning process to determine the appropriate level of contractor support for the particular site.

The contracting agency evaluates contractors based on their performance. The evaluations assess the contractor's ability to identify and focus on issues critical to the site, the innovativeness of their technical approach, the quality and timeliness of their work, and whether the work was completed within the established budget.

EXHIBIT 9-1

SAMPLE TASKS FOR CONTRACTORS IN A COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM*

Activity	Contractor Responsibilities	Lead Agency Responsibilities
Community interviews	Arrange interview dates and logistics; conduct interviews; analyze social and political environment; prepare report on site history; brief lead agency	Identify individuals for interviews; participate in interviews; follow up with the community; answer questions raised by citizens during interviews
Community relations plan	Develop and draft plan	Review and approve plan
Telephone contacts	Make follow-up calls when appropriate	Make initial calls to all elected, appointed, and citizen leaders
Mailing list	Compile names, addresses, and phone numbers of appropriate Federal, State, and local officials, interested groups, and individuals	Review mailing list; add names
News releases	Research text of releases	Draft, edit, and distribute
Public meetings	Logistical support for small meetings with citizens and lead agency staff; prepare agenda; prepare summary of meeting; secure court reporter; provide audio-visual graphics support; assist EPA staff with presentation practice or "dry run"	Approve agenda; prepare and deliver presentations; conduct meeting
Fact sheets	Research fact sheet; draft fact sheet; reproduce and distribute	Review and approve fact sheets
News conferences	Arrange time and location; provide suggestions to lead agency staff on how to answer difficult questions; prepare any written handouts	Invite officials or reporters; practice answers; review and approve handouts; prepare statements; provide answers to all questions (contractors do not answer questions)
Workshops	Design and, if requested, conduct workshops; arrange all logistics and support	Make available technical staff to discuss subject areas for workshop; conduct workshop

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*EPA Regional Office or State response agency directs all contractor work. Support activities listed are performed at the discretion of the staff with responsibility for the community relations program.

EXHIBIT 9-1
(Continued)

SAMPLE TASKS FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS CONTRACTORS IN A COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM

Activity	Contractor Responsibilities	Lead Agency Responsibilities
Public inquiry responses	Prepare draft responses to public inquiries, except on policy issues	Coordinate with technical and legal staff to prepare responses to inquiries on policy issues; review and approve technical responses
Responsiveness summary	Compile and summarize major issues; prepare draft responses; draft responsiveness summary	Provide contractor with comments received and EPA or State responses to comments and inquiries; review and approve responsiveness summary
Revised community relations plan	After ROD for a site is completed, arrange further interviews or analysis and draft revised community relations plan for remedial design and remedial action phases	Review, revise, and approve revised community relations plan
Telephone hotlines	Assess the level of community concern and site activities to recommend if a telephone hotline is appropriate; arrange logistics to receive and record calls; incorporate inquiries and responses into responsiveness summary for the site	Receive and respond to calls; provide agency staff member to serve as contact
Exhibits	Conduct research; prepare exhibits	Develop general design; review and approve
Presentations	Advise agency speakers; provide audiovisual support	Design and deliver presentations
Site tours	Arrange time and meeting place; contact tour participants; arrange protective gear; provide handouts (maps, test results, fact sheets, etc.)	Approve tour arrangements and handouts; act as tour guide; answer questions

APPENDIX A

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTIVITIES

This appendix discusses many of the community relations activities mentioned in the preceding chapters. It is intended as a reference to be consulted when a decision must be made on whether and when to conduct a certain type of community relations activity. The discussion of each activity includes:

- A description of the activity;
- Its purpose;
- Techniques for conducting the activity (key points to remember);
- When to conduct such an activity in a Superfund response;
- Other activities that can be conducted in conjunction with this activity;
- Benefits of the activity; and
- Limitations to its effectiveness.

The following activities are discussed:

A.1 Briefings
A.2 Community Interviews
A.3 Contact Person
A.4 Door-to-Door Canvassing
A.5 Exhibits
A.6 Fact Sheets
A.7 Formal Public Hearings
A.8 Information Repository
A.9 News Conferences
A.10 News Releases
A.11 Observation Deck
A.12 On-Scene Information Office
A.13 Open Houses
A.14 Presentations
A.15 Public Comment Period
A.16 Public Meetings
A.17 Public Notices
A.18 Responsiveness Summaries
A.19 Revision of Community Relations Plans
A.20 Site Tours
A.21 Small Group Meetings
A.22 Superfund Briefing Book
A.23 Technical Advisor
A.24 Telephone Contacts
A.25 Telephone Hotline
A.26 Telephone Network/Phone Tree
A.27 Translations
A.28 Using Existing Groups/Publications
A.29 Workshops

As Chapters 3 and 4 emphasized, the key to a successful community relations program is targeting activities to the distinctive needs of the community. Therefore, not all of the activities described in this appendix are appropriate for every response action.

All activities discussed in this appendix could be conducted during the RI/FS phase of a remedial action. Most could also be conducted during the remedial design, remedial action, and operation and maintenance phases. Several are activities that would even be appropriate during the preliminary assessment/site investigation phases. This appendix identifies the specific type and phases of a response action where a community relations activity may be appropriate. The applicability of specific activities will also depend on the characteristics and needs of the community and the availability of agency resources.

This appendix does not exhaustively discuss techniques for conducting public participation activities. Instead, it calls attention to key points to remember in conducting such activities in the context of a Superfund response action. Readers should consult public participation manuals, such as the manual prepared for EPA's water programs, for additional information. A few of these manuals are listed in the bibliography at the end of the handbook.

A.1 BRIEFINGS

Description of Activity

Brief sessions held with key State and local officials and citizens to inform them of the status of site activities. Agency staff conduct these sessions in person, and the briefings usually precede release of information to the media.

Purpose

Removal Action: To notify key officials and citizens of the nature and reasons for the action, and to inform them of recent developments at the site.

Remedial Response: To inform key officials and citizens about recent developments at the site; to provide them with background material on technical studies, results of the field investigations, and engineering design; and to report to them on remedial action planning and progress.

Technique

To schedule and hold briefings:

Inform key State and local officials, citizens, and other interested parties ahead of time of a briefing concerning recent activities at the site or other related topics. It is usually best to hold the initial briefing in a small public room, such as a hotel meeting room or a conference room. Where relationships are antagonistic, it may be best to hold the briefing in a neutral location.

Present a short, official statement about the response plans or preliminary findings from the site activities (such as inspections, investigations, and engineering design). Describe the EPA or State decision process, and announce future steps in the process.

Answer questions about the statement. Anticipate questions and be prepared to answer them simply and directly.

When to Conduct

Briefings are appropriate when State or local officials or citizens have expressed a moderate to high level of concern about the site.

Briefings are recommended at any point during the RI/FS, remedial design, remedial action, and O&M phases of a remedial action. If local officials or citizens have expressed concern during the preliminary assessment or site investigation phases, a briefing may be appropriate to explain the Superfund program and the technical activities that are scheduled for the site. Briefings are also useful when unexpected events or delays occur at the site.

Accompanying Activities

Briefings usually precede **news conferences, news releases, small group meetings**, or **public meetings**.

Benefits

Briefings allow State and local officials and citizens to question the agency directly about any activity prior to public release of information regarding that activity. By doing so, officials and citizen leaders will be prepared to answer questions from their constituents when the information becomes public. Briefings also allow for the exchange of information and concerns.

Limitations

Bad feelings or bad publicity could result if some individuals who believe they should be invited to the briefings are not. Care must be taken not to exclude such persons, or otherwise to convey an impression of favoritism towards certain interested parties.

Although briefings can be effective, they should not be the only means of communicating with Superfund site communities. Briefings for State and local officials and citizens should always be complemented by activities to inform the general public, such as **small group meetings or public meetings**.

A.2 COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

Description

Informal face-to-face interviews held with selected local residents, government officials, community groups, media representatives, potentially responsible parties, and other individuals interested in site activities. (This activity was called "on-site discussions" in the 1983 interim version of the handbook.)**(19)**

Purpose

To obtain first-hand information about the community near a Superfund site. To gain an understanding of the site's history, the community's involvement with the site, and the political climate in the area. To identify credible sources and disseminators of information. To learn how the community would like to be involved in the Superfund process. To lay the groundwork for developing an effective community relations plan for the site.

Technique

Conduct community interviews before the community relations plan (CRP) is prepared.

Identify contact people: Begin by contacting the project officer for the site, and staff from appropriate State or local environmental agencies. These people should be able to provide some background information about the site and the names of key people to contact.

Prepare for the interviews: Before conducting the interviews, learn as much as possible about community concerns regarding the site. Review any available agency files that contain news clippings, documents, letters, and other sources of information relevant to the site. Identify local residents, key State and local officials, and citizen organizations that have been involved with or expressed concern about the site. While it may not be possible to meet with all interested parties, staff should determine which individuals are most likely to provide the greatest variety of perspectives about the site. Prepare a list of questions that can serve as a general guide when speaking with residents and local officials.

Arrange the interviews: Telephone the contact people and arrange a convenient time and place to meet. Ideally, the meeting place should promote candid discussions. While government and media representatives are likely to prefer meeting in their offices during business hours, local residents and community groups may be available only in non-business hours. Meetings at their homes may be most convenient.

Meet with local government officials: Interview government officials. Include a brief introduction explaining why they are being interviewed and what kind of information is needed.

Meet with residents and community groups: Be sensitive to residents' needs and remind them that the purpose of the interview is to gather preliminary information for planning an appropriate program for citizen participation. This reminder should prevent raising unrealistic expectations (for instance, about how quickly a site will be cleaned up).

With adequate preparation, the interviewer can acquire information useful for developing the CRP, as well as respond to initial citizen concerns about the site. It must be emphasized, however, that the primary purpose of community interviews is to collect, rather than disseminate, information.

Assure interviewees that their statements will remain confidential: At the beginning of each interview, explain that the CRP will be presented to agency officials and other interested persons, and will be placed in an information repository established at the site. Explain that the information will be used to understand community concerns and that a record of the contact will be made, but the agency will not attribute any specific statements or information to any individual without his or her permission. Ask interviewees if they would like their names, addresses, and phone numbers on the contract list, which is appended to the CRP.

Identify other possible contacts: During the discussions, ask for names and phone numbers of persons who could provide additional information on the site, such as district health officials or local ministers. Add these names to the list of interested citizens.

Gather information on past citizen participation activities: Ask the interviewees how they perceive the agency's past efforts in providing the community with information about the site, and whether they would like to receive any fact sheets or other printed information as the response action continues. Keep a list of persons interested in being kept informed.

Assess how citizens would like to be involved in the Superfund process: Briefly explain the Superfund process and ask the interviewees how they would like to be involved and informed of site activities.

Identify citizens' concerns: When identifying concerns, consider the following factors:

- **Threat to health** -- Do community residents believe their health is or has been affected by the hazardous substances at the site?

- **Economic loss** -- Do local homeowners or businesses believe that the site has caused them or will cause them economic loss?

- **Agency credibility** -- Does the public have confidence in the performance of the agency responsible for the remedial or removal action?

- **Involvement** -- Has a group leader been vocal in the community? Has this group leader gained substantial local following? What has been the working relationship between the group leader and agency officials? What has been the working relationship between the group leader and other groups?

- **Media** -- Have events at the site received substantial coverage by local, State, or national media? Do local residents believe that media coverage accurately reflects the nature and intensity of their concerns?

- **Number affected** -- How many households or businesses perceive themselves as affected by the site?

When to Conduct

As a basic requirement of the Superfund community relations program, community interviews must be conducted before a CRP is developed. Ideally, community interviews should also be conducted before revising a CRP, because months, or perhaps years, may have elapsed since the first round of interviews, and therefore community sentiment may have changed. If there has been much interaction with the community and interested parties, agency information on citizen concerns may be current and active. In such situations, it may be necessary to conduct only a few informal discussions in person or by telephone with selected, informed individuals who clearly represent the community. This small amount of input would verify, update, or round out the information already available to the lead agency and provide sufficient basis for the development of a CRP. The lead agency, with the input of the support agency, will decide which interviews and how many are appropriate to accomplish the objective of obtaining sufficient information about community needs and concerns to develop an effective CRP. The revised CRP is prepared prior to the remedial design stage.

Accompanying Activities

Because community interviews are held to determine an appropriate community relations strategy for the site, these interviews will generally precede, rather than be accompanied by, other community relations activities. Nevertheless, community interviews will involve making some initial **telephone contacts** and identifiying appropriate locations for **information repositories** and **public meetings**.

Benefits

The views of citizens and government officials are often not stated in the media. Community interviews, however, are excellent sources of opinions, expectations, and concerns regarding a response action. In addition, these interviews may lead to additional information sources. Furthermore, face-to-face interviews can lay the groundwork for building an open, honest, and positive relationship between the community and officials responsible for the response.

Limitations

Individuals may have legitimately different perceptions of the same set of events. As a result, each interviewee may have a different story to tell. Those responsible for conducting the interviews should be particularly sensitive to various points of view, and not dismiss one account as being less factual or accurate than another.

A.3 CONTACT PERSON

Description

Designation of one staff member as a contact person who assumes responsibility for addressing citizens' concerns, answering their questions individually, and responding to inquiries from the media.

Purpose

To help build trust between the agency and citizens.

Technique

Designate a contact person for each removal or remedial action to respond to citizens' requests for information, answer their questions, and address their concerns on any aspect of the cleanup process. If citizens are able to interact with the same staff person throughout the response action, they may gradually develop more trust and confidence in agency actions.

When a contact person is assigned to a site:

Send out a news release announcing the contact person to all local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. Include the contact person's telephone number and mailing address in all news releases, fact sheets, and mailings.

Inform all agency staff members who may be involved with the site--and consequently, may be approached by the contact person for information--of the new contact. Specify the role the contact person is to play at the site.

Keep a log book of all citizen requests and comments received by the contact person, and how each one was handled. This will help to assure that incoming requests are not filed and forgotten.

When to Conduct

A contact person should be designated for each site when the response action begins--that is, before the RI for remedial actions and any field activity for removals.

Accompanying Activities

Designation of the contact person should be announced in **news releases** and **fact sheets**. If a contact person has been designated during the RI/FS process, the record of citizen requests and comments received by the contact can later be incorporated into the **responsiveness summary**.

The contact person should also be responsible for making sure that all relevant material is filed in the site's **information repository**.

Benefits

A contact person can assure citizens that the agency is actively listening to their concerns and can provide the community with consistent information.

Limitations

The contact person may not have the authority to resolve all of the concerns raised by citizens; his or her role may be limited to providing information and facilitating communication between agency staff and citizens. If, for any reason, the identity of the contact person changes, it is important to ensure that the community is well-informed about this change.

A.4 DOOR-TO-DOOR CANVASSING

Description

Gathering information by calling on individuals door-to-door.

Purpose

To meet with community members individually and directly to discuss site problems or gather needed information.

Technique

A door-to-door canvass involves training staff to gather information, answer questions, and deal with a possibly irate or suspicious public.

Procedures to follow in preparing a door-to-door canvass include:

Identify the area where canvassing is necessary or desirable. Determine the area where special information must be given or collected. This area may range from just a few streets to several neighborhoods.

Send a letter to the residents in the designated area announcing that staff members will be calling door-to-door in the area and explaining the purpose of the canvassing program. Advance notice will reduce the suspicions of residents and encourage their cooperation.

Provide canvassers with the information they will need to know to respond to questions. Residents will want to know what is happening at the site and may have many questions about, for example, possible health effects of various contaminants. Distinguish between the types of questions that a canvasser may answer (i.e., questions concerning soil or water testing) and the types of questions that should be referred to an agency specialist (e.g., highly technical questions concerning the site, or agency policies).

Canvass the designated area. Note the name, address, and telephone number of residents requesting more information. Note also the names of those who were especially helpful in giving information. Be prepared to tell residents when they will next be contacted and how (i.e., by telephone, by letter, or in person).

Send a thank-you letter after the canvass to all residents in the canvassed area. If possible, provide information concerning recent site developments and any results or pertinent information gathered by the canvass. Respond to special requests for information either in the thank-you letter or by telephone.

When to Conduct

This activity is best used when information is needed from a specific group of individuals. For example, canvassing can be used to gather signatures to gain access to residential property for soil and water testing. Where the goal is to convey rather than to collect information, a more appropriate approach may be to send a letter with the relevant information and the name of the staff contact person. This letter should be followed up with a telephone call.

Accompanying Activities

Telephone contacts and **community interviews** may help to identify appropriate areas for canvassing efforts. Canvassers should add to the **mailing list** names of individuals who either requested additional information or provided particularly useful information.

Benefits

This activity involves face-to-face contact, thereby ensuring that citizens' questions can be directly and individually answered.

Limitations

This technique is very time-consuming and costly, even in a small area. Furthermore, trained people that can answer questions at the necessary level of detail are not typically available for this activity. Thus, this activity is not recommended for the dissemination of information except in an emergency.

A.5 EXHIBITS

Description of Activity

Setting up visual displays of maps, charts, diagrams, or photographs. These may be accompanied by a brief text explaining the displays and the purpose of the exhibit.

Purpose

To illustrate issues and proposed cleanup actions associated with hazardous substance problems in a creative and informative display. To make technical information more accessible and understandable.

Technique

To develop and display an exhibit:

Identify the target audience and the message. Possible audiences include:

- General public;
- Concerned citizens;
- Environmental groups;
- Media representatives; and
- Public officials.

Possible messages include:

- Description of the site;
- Historical background;
- Community relations activities;
- Proposed remedies; and
- Health and safety effects associated with the site.

Determine where the exhibit will be set up. If the general public is the target audience, for example, assemble the exhibit in a highly visible location, such as a public library, convention hall, or a shopping center. If concerned citizens are the target audience, set up a temporary exhibit at a public meeting. An exhibit could even be as simple as a bulletin board at the site or staff trailer.

Design the exhibit and its scale according to the message to be transmitted. Include photos or illustrations. Use text sparingly.

When to Conduct

This activity can be used during any phase of a response action.

Accompanying Activities

Exhibits are useful to display at public **meetings** or public **hearings**. If an **observation deck** is installed at a site, a nearby exhibit could explain response activities underway.

Benefits

Exhibits tend to stimulate public interest and understanding. While a news clipping may be glanced at and easily forgotten, exhibits have a visual impact and leave a lasting impression.

Limitations

Although exhibits inform the public, they are a one-way communication tool. One solution to this drawback is to attach blank postcards to the exhibit, encouraging viewers to comment or submit inquiries by mail to the agency. Another approach is to leave the phone number of the contact who can answer questions during working hours. These requests must be answered, however, or citizens may perceive the agency as unresponsive to their concerns.

A.6 FACT SHEETS

Description

A brief report summarizing current or proposed activities of the cleanup program. The fact sheet presents technical and/or enforcement information in a clear and understandable format.

Purpose

To help ensure that the public is informed of the status and findings of cleanup actions, and that citizens understand the issues associated with the response program.

Technique

To develop fact sheets:

Identify phases during the cleanup program where fact sheets would be useful. For instance, fact sheets have proven helpful:

- At the beginning of the RI;
- At the end of the RI;
- When the FS is released; and
- When the ROD is released.

Fact sheets may also be appropriate during the preliminary assessment/site investigation, remedial design, remedial action, and O&M phases of a cleanup action.

For each fact sheet, identify the information to be transmitted. Types of information might include:

- A brief background on the site;
- The legal justification or triggering event for the proposed action(s);
- A timetable for the proposed action(s);
- A description of the issues or problems associated with the site;
- A description of the remedial alternatives being considered;
- A description of public participation opportunities during the cleanup process;
- The name, address, and phone number of an agency contact person who will provide additional information on request; and
- The location of information repositories where material is available to the public for review.

Select a simple format for presenting the information. Avoid using bureaucratic jargon or highly technical language in the text.

Be concise.

When to Conduct

Fact sheets are appropriate whenever new information is available, and whenever a public comment period is required during the response action. In addition to the various stages of the RI/FS, fact sheets can be written to explain the site inspection, remedial design, remedial action, O&M, and the enforcement process.

Additional fact sheets may be prepared after the agency selects a remedial alternative and before the final engineering design of the remedial action is complete.

Accompanying Activities

Community relations staff at Superfund sites have found that fact sheets can be a particularly useful technique if distributed at a public meeting or public hearing. Fact sheets can provide background information which is then elaborated on at the public meeting or hearing. A public notice should be provided whenever a fact sheet becomes available. Fact sheets should always include the name of a contact person, who can provide further information. If a general fact sheet is available when community interviews are conducted, it may be distributed to community members interviewed for the community relations plan.

Benefits

Fact sheets are effective in briefly summarizing facts and issues involved in the cleanup process.

Limitations

Fact sheets take time and require careful coordination between technical and community relations staff. A poorly written fact sheet can be misleading or confusing. Fact sheets are also a one-way communication tool, and therefore should always provide the name and number of a contact person.

Fact sheets should look professional. People will be less likely to read fact sheets consisting of a solid sheet of typed text than a fact sheet that has been typeset with clear, easy-to-read illustrations. Moreover, a well-designed fact sheet suggests that the agency is taking its community relations program seriously.

A.7 FORMAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

Description

Formal hearings organized by the agency that are open to the public.

Purpose

To provide an opportunity for formal comment and testimony on proposed actions, without necessarily answering questions or engaging in dialogue with the audience. All testimony received becomes part of the public record.

Technique

To conduct public hearings:

Anticipate the audience and the issues of concern. The public may not become actively involved in hazardous substance issues until a cleanup alternative is proposed or selected. Meet citizens' needs for information before a formal hearing, with, for example, fact sheets, small-group meetings, and briefings.

Schedule the hearing location and time so that citizens (particularly handicapped individuals) have easy access. Identify and follow any procedures established by the local and State governments for public hearings. Ensure the availability of sufficient seating, microphones, lighting, and recorders. Consider holding the hearing in the evening or on a weekend to accommodate the majority of concerned citizens.

Announce the public hearing at least 2 weeks before the hearing date. Provide notice of the hearing in local newspapers and mailings to interested citizens. Make a follow-up phone calls to major participants to ensure that the notice has been received.

Provide an opportunity for local officials and citizens to submit written comments. Not all individuals will want to provide oral testimony. Publicize where written comments can be submitted and how they will be reviewed.

Provide a transcript of all oral and written comments. Announce where the transcript will be available for public review.

When to Conduct

The most appropriate time to hold a public hearing is when the draft FS report is released. Schedule the hearing some time during the 3-week public comment period. Public hearings may also be appropriate during the remedial design.

Accompanying Activities

Fact sheets providing background information and an update of site activities can be distributed at public hearings. If held to solicit comments on the proposed plan, the hearing will shortly be followed by a **responsiveness summary**, which documents all public comments submitted and agency responses to these comments. For Superfund sites where residents have exhibited high levels of concern, or where citizens are not very familiar with the Superfund program, an educational **workshop** may be helpful 1 or 2 weeks before the public hearing. The workshop could provide detailed information on the Superfund program, explain the technical aspects of the issues at the site, and describe how citizens' input will be incorporated into the remedial action. Transcripts of all public hearings should be placed at the **information repository** and in the **administrative record**.

Benefits

The major benefit of a formal public hearing is that it allows citizens an opportunity to present formally their concerns and ideas to the agency and provides clear documentation of community concerns.

Limitations

Communication during the hearing tends to be formal and one-way, flowing from the public to the agency, and often creates an atmosphere of "us versus them." Citizens usually have little opportunity to have their questions answered, which may be frustrating to some. Holding a question-and-answer session at the end of the presentations may help solve this problem.

A high level of citizen concern may precipitate a disorderly public hearing, where citizen groups attempt to gain support for their positions. The hearing can easily become an adversarial confrontation. One way to avoid hostility or confrontation is to make sure the community residents have had an opportunity to express their concerns in a less formal setting (for instance, in small meetings or open houses). More frequent contact with concerned citizens before a formal public meeting decreases the chance of confrontations.

A.8 INFORMATION REPOSITORY

Description

The **information repository** is a project file or repository containing site information, documents on site activities, and general information about the Superfund program. EPA now requires an information repository at all remedial action sites and any removal action sites likely to extend beyond 45 days.

Purpose

To allow open and convenient public access to all site-related documents approved by the agency for public disclosure.

Technique

To establish an information repository:

Determine a location early in the response action. With remedial actions, one or more locations could be identified during community interviews. Typical locations might be local public libraries, town halls, or public health offices. Ensure that there are copying facilities available.

Depending on the level of community concerns, or the location of the site relative to the surrounding communities, more than one repository may be desirable. For example, if a county government seat is several miles from the Superfund site, and county officials have expressed a strong interest in the site, two repositories may be advisable: one in the community closest to the site itself, and the other in the town where the county government seat is based. At least one repository should be open during evening hours and on weekends.

Select and deposit the materials to be included in the file. At minimum, the repository for a remedial site should include copies of the following:

- Draft and final FS report;
- Responsiveness summary;
- Signed ROD;
- Administrative order on consent or consent decree;
- CRP;
- RI/FS work plan;
- RI report; and
- Remedial design workplan.

The following materials also are strongly suggested for the repository:

- Copies of CERCLA and RCRA;
- A copy of the NCP;
- A copy of the cooperative agreement, if a state-lead site;
- Documentation of site sampling results;
- Brochures, fact sheets, and other information about the Superfund program and the specific site;
- Copies of press releases and newspaper clippings that refer to the site; and
- Any other relevant material (for instance, published studies on the potential risks associated with specific chemicals that have been found at the site).

Clearly indicate how individuals can comment on documents in the information repository. Place a cover note on documents (e.g., the CRP) indicating who is to receive comments on the document and when.

Publicize the existence of the repository. Notify local government officials, citizen groups, and the local media of the location of the project file and hours of operation. Newsletters of local community organizations and church groups are another means of notifying the public.

Keep the file up-to-date. Timely replacement of dated information helps avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

When to Conduct

At least one repository must be established near each remedial site before the RI/FS begins. Since repository locations are frequently identified during community interviews, the repository should be established as soon as the CRP has been approved and maintained throughout the remedial action, including O&M. At a removal site extending beyond 45 days, the repository should be established as soon as the CRP has been approved.

A.8 INFORMATION REPOSITORY (Continued)

Accompanying Activities

The **contact person** should be responsible for making sure that all relevant materials have been filed in the repository.

The **administrative record**, which is now required by SARA, may be included in the same location as a repository at or near the site. The **administrative record** is a legal file of documents upon which the lead agency bases the selection of a response action and on which judicial review of response actions will be based. It must be available to the public at or near the facility. Duplicates may also be located at a central docket, such as a Regional or State office. Refer to Draft Interim Guidance on CERCLA Administrative Records for further information.

Benefits

An information repository provides local officials, citizens, and the media with easy access to accurate, detailed, and current data about the site. It demonstrates that officials are responsive to citizens' needs for comprehensive site information.

Limitations

A repository requires continual maintenance to avoid misunderstandings based on dated information. Agency staff must check the repository regularly, to ensure that all essential materials are available.

A.9 NEWS CONFERENCES

Description

Information sessions or briefings held for representatives of the news media, but also open to the general public.

Purpose

To provide the media with accurate information concerning important developments during or after the action. To announce plans for any future actions at the site.

Technique

To conduct news conferences:

Evaluate the need for a news conference. Because statements made during a news conference may be misinterpreted by the media, use this technique carefully.

Notify members of the local and regional media of the time, location, and topic of the news conference. Local officials may also be invited to attend, either as observers or participants, depending upon their interest. A news conference that includes local officials underscores the agency's responsiveness and commitment to their interests and concerns.

Plan exactly what to say ahead of time. Live conferences leave no room for mistakes.

Anticipate reporters' questions and have your answers ready.

Present a short, official statement, both written and spoken, about developments and findings. In addition, explain agency decisions to proceed with a removal or remedial action and identify the next steps.

Open the conference to questions, to be answered by agency officials, local officials, and any other experts present. Have technical staff on hand to answer any technical questions. Decide ahead of time who will answer what types of questions.

When to Conduct

News conferences should be used primarily to announce significant findings at the site. Other community relations techniques such as fact sheets, news releases, and public meetings may be more appropriate for reporting the results of site inspections, sampling results, or other preliminary information. A news conference announcing preliminary results of technical studies may unnecessarily fuel public apprehensions about the site.

News conferences can be used during any phase of an action, including preliminary assessment, site inspection, RI/FS, remedial design, remedial action, and O&M.

Accompanying Activities

News conferences can be made before or after **formal public hearings** or **public meetings**. They are accompanied by **news releases**.

Benefits

News conferences provide a public forum for the agency to announce plans and developments. They are also an efficient way to reach a large audience. A written news release can help ensure that the facts are presented accurately to the media. During the question period, the agency spokesperson can demonstrate knowledge of the site and may be able to improve media relations by providing thorough, informative answers to all questions.

Limitations

A news conference can focus considerable attention on the situation, potentially causing unnecessary local concern. Residents may not welcome the increased attention that such media coverage is apt to bring. News releases or other lower-profile means of disseminating information should be considered as alternatives.

A risk inherent in news conferences is that the media can take comments out of context and create false impressions. This risk is heightened when staff are unprepared or when the conference is not properly structured or unanticipated questions are asked.

A.10 NEWS RELEASES

Description

Statements released to the news media that discuss on-site actions proposed by the lead agency.

Purpose

To make an official statement at milestones in the response program, such as selection of a remedial alternative, key project dates, and completion of containment or cleanup actions.

Technique

News releases can effectively and quickly disseminate information to large numbers of people. They may also be used to announce public meetings, report the results of public meetings, and to describe how citizen concerns were considered in the response action.

To prepare news releases:

Identify the relevant regional and local newspapers and broadcast media, and learn their deadlines. Get to know the editor and environmental reporter who might cover the issue.

Contact other involved agencies at the Federal, State, and local level to ensure that all facts and procedures are coordinated and correct before releasing any statement.

Select the information to be communicated. Place the most important and newsworthy elements up front and present additional information in descending order of importance. Enlist the aid of a public affairs specialist in writing the release. When a draft FS is issued, for example, the news release should contain the following facts:

- The findings of the investigation;
- A statement of what needs to be done;
- A statement of what will be accomplished by the alternatives under consideration;
- Their costs and benefits; and
- The next steps.

Use supporting paragraphs to elaborate on findings, alternatives, and other pertinent information. Mention any opportunities for citizen input (public consultations, public meetings, etc.), and cite factors that might contribute to earlier implementation or delays in the remedial action. Note the location of the information repository (or other sources for relevant documents).

Be brief. Limit the news release to essential facts and issues.

Use simple language. Avoid the use of professional jargon and overly technical words.

Identify the agency issuing the news release. The top of the sheet should include:

- Name and address of the issuing agency;
- Release time ("For Immediate Release" or "Please Observe Embargo Until") and date;
- Name and phone number of the contact person for further information; and
- A headline summarizing the action taken.

Send copies of the release to local officials and citizen groups leaders before the release is given to the press.

When to Conduct

News releases can be used when significant findings are discovered at the site, when program milestones are reached, or when schedules are delayed.

Avoid, however, issuing a news release at times when it may be difficult for citizens to get in touch with responsible officials (e.g., Friday afternoons, or the day before a holiday).

Accompanying Activities

News releases can accompany any **formal public hearings** or **public meetings** held by EPA or the State. They commonly accompany **news conferences**.

Benefits

A news release to the local media can reach a large audience quickly and inexpensively. If the name, address, and phone number of a contact person are included, reporters (and possibly interested citizens) can raise questions about the information in the release.

Limitations

Because news releases must be brief, they often exclude details that the public may be interested in. A news release should therefore be used in conjunction with other methods of communication that permit more attention to detail. A news release is not an appropriate vehicle for transmitting sensitive information. In some cases, a news release can call unwarranted attention to a situation; a mailing to selected individuals should be considered instead.

A.11 OBSERVATION DECK

Description

An elevated deck on the site, near the area where remedial or removal activities are in progress.

Purpose

To enable interested citizens to observe cleanup activities directly and hence remove some of the mystique that surrounds cleanup actions.

Technique

The decision to establish an observation deck should be based on the following criteria:

- The community's understanding of site activities will be enhanced by direct observation;
- There will be sufficient activity at the site to promote the community's interest;
- Staff are available to supervise, during all hours of operation, public use of the observation deck; and
- It is physically possible to set up an observation deck in a place where there is no danger to the public.

When to Conduct

An observation deck could be used at any point in the remedial process, but is most appropriate to use during the construction phase of a remedial action.

Accompanying Activities

An observation deck could complement periodic **site tours**. Citizens can initially be educated about cleanup actions during the tours, then can monitor the progress of these activities at their convenience from the observation deck. **Fact sheets** or an informative **exhibit** placed near the deck could also explain site activities.

Benefits

An observation deck allows citizens and media representatives to observe site activities without hindering the activities.

A.11 OBSERVATION DECK (Continued)

Limitations

An observation deck needs to be supplemented with an informational/ interpretive program, so that citizens understand what they see.

A.12 ON-SCENE INFORMATION OFFICE

Description

A trailer (or small building) near the site staffed by a full-time or part-time person who responds to inquiries and prepares information releases.

Purpose

To respond immediately to local questions and concerns.

Technique

To provide an on-scene information office:

- Rent a trailer, or designate space in a trailer used for other purposes as well.
- Install a telephone to respond to inquiries and publicize the number in local newspapers.
- Assign someone to staff the trailer. Establish **regular** hours, including some during the weekend and weekday evenings. Publicize the trailer's hours and the services it offers.
- Equip the trailer with the same materials normally contained in an information repository.

When to Conduct

This activity is especially useful during removal actions, when a cleanup at a site involves particularly complex technologies or processes, when there is a very high level of risk to human health or the environment, particularly when evacuation or longer term relocation of residents is necessary, or when a significant amount of interaction between EPA and community members is expected. An agency staff person should remain on site until the removal or other appropriate action is completed. However, where resources are limited, staff members may be on site only at critical points in the cleanup process or during an emergency and otherwise collect information requests from a telephone answering machine or forward calls to the EPA regional office. All such inquiries must be responded to promptly (within 24 hours).

An on-scene information office can also be used during remedial actions where there is a continuous stream of citizen inquiries or for short periods of time when important developments occur (e.g., the release of long-awaited sampling results).

Accompanying Activities

The on-site staff person can conduct **meetings** to inform citizens about the status of the cleanup actions and prepare and distribute **fact sheets** and weekly news updates to local residents.

Individuals staffing a community relations on-scene information office for an extended period of time will necessarily have a special role in the community. Involvement in other community relations activities may represent a large part of their function. In addition to distributing information to local residents, on-site staff will be responsible for maintaining data bases of residents' addresses, the status of access to property, daily technical reports, and a daily log of citizen inquiries. It is important that on-site staff monitor public perceptions and concerns daily (i.e., a "five-phone-calls-a-day" practice can help to ensure the consistency of such perceptions). Finally and perhaps most importantly, on-site staff members will frequently serve as a liaison between the public and other agencies at the Federal, State, and county levels, as well as contractors (e.g., staff members may be able to provide sampling results over the telephone, if such information is available, to concerned residents who are waiting for written results from another agency or contractor).

Benefits

An on-scene information office can be an effective activity for ensuring that citizens are adequately informed about the agency's actions and that their concerns are addressed immediately.

Limitations

An information office can be expensive, since it requires, at minimum, a part-time staff person, trailer rental, and a telephone. Hence, it should be used only when community concerns are high or may be in the future.

A.13 OPEN HOUSES

Description

An informal meeting in a public location where people can talk to agency officials on a one-to-one basis.

Purpose

To allow citizens to ask questions and express their concerns directly to community relations and technical staff.

Technique

To conduct an open house:

Select a date, time, and location for the open house that encourages attendance. Evening hours or weekends are preferable. The location should be in an easily accessible building familiar to residents (such as a public library or local meeting room).

Anticipate the number of attendees and plan accordingly. If a large number of people is expected, consider the possibility of holding two open houses to enable staff to greet and talk with each attendee. Alternatively, increase (if possible) the number of staff who will host the open house. As a general rule, planning for one staff member per 15-20 attendees should foster an informal atmosphere for conversation, and thereby avoid the situation where a staff member has to speak to a "crowd."

Publicize the open house at least 2 weeks ahead of time, if possible. Send announcements to newspapers, television and radio stations, citizens on the mailing list, and any interested community organizations that publish newsletters.

Ensure that appropriate agency staff attend, so that citizens can meet those who will be responsible for site activities. The staff present should be able to answer both technical and policy questions.

When to Conduct

An open house is most appropriate when key milestones have been reached, or major decisions made. For example, release of sampling results or draft studies are appropriate times to hold open houses.

Accompanying Activities

Exhibits and **fact sheets** can provide background information that enables citizens to ask more informed questions about the site during the open house.

A.13 OPEN HOUSES (Continued)

Benefits

The one-to-one conversations during an open house can help build trust and establish a rapport between citizens and agency staff.

Limitations

Planning and conducting an open house can require a significant amount of staff time. A low turnout may not justify the effort. Hence, community interest in the site should be significant before an open house is planned.

A.14 PRESENTATIONS

Description

Speeches to clubs, civic or church organizations, school classes, or similar local audiences.

Purpose

To improve public understanding of the problems associated with a site and to explain how the agency will address them.

Technique

Develop procedures that can easily be changed to suit different audiences:

Select a standard format such as the following:

- Describe the problems;
- Describe how the problems affect the public;
- Discuss what is being done about the problem; and
- Discuss how citizens can assist the agency in response efforts and obtain additional information.

Adjust the tone and technical complexity to suit the audience's needs.

Set a time limit of 20 minutes. Consider having several staff members deliver short segments of the presentation. Allow time for a question-and-answer period.

Schedule presentation at convenient times, possibly evenings or weekends.

Select supporting materials -- slides, graphics, exhibits, etc. -- that will hold the audience's attention but not distract from the speaker's message. Conduct a trial run in front of colleagues and rehearse the presentation as much as possible.

Contact groups that may be interested in learning about hazardous substance problems. Announce the program through the media and in other communications.

When to Conduct

Presentations are more effective if they focus on major milestones in the response action, such as recommendation of a site for the NPL, or release of the draft FS report. In addition, there should be at least moderate interest in the site.

Accompanying Activities

Fact sheets should be distributed, if possible.

Benefits

Because the presentation is delivered in person, the audience has a chance to ask questions, and the agency can gauge citizens' concerns. Also, many people can be reached at one time, reducing individual inquiries.

Limitations

Presentations require substantial effort to be effective. A poorly-planned presentation can distort residents' views of the situation.

Because the presentation is rehearsed, accommodating different or unanticipated concerns of the audience can be difficult. Handle these concerns during a question-and-answer period after the presentation.

If substantive issues or technical details cannot be handled in the time allowed for the presentation, name a contact for further information.

A.15 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Description

A designated time period where comments from citizens are formally accepted by the agency responsible for the Superfund response.

Purpose

To allow citizens to review and comment on the agency's proposed course of action.

Technique

To hold a public comment period:

Announce the public comment period at least 2 weeks in advance and again just before the event. This announcement must be made in a major local newspaper of general circulation. It may be included in the newspaper notice of the proposed plan or other action. Identify where copies of the pertinent documents can be found, and where all written comments should be submitted.

Identify a contact person within the agency who will answer citizens' questions regarding the public comment period. Publicize the name and telephone number of this contact person.

Prepare a transcript of any public meetings which occur during the public comment period on the proposed plan and RI/FS report. Insert the transcript in the administrative record.

Document with a memo to the file or Record of Communication any other comments expressed that are not available in written form, which are of significance to evaluation of any of the alternatives.

When to Conduct

A minimum 3-week public comment period must be held when the RI/FS and proposed plan have been released for public review. (EPA plans to propose extending this requirement in the revised NCP to no less than 30-calendar days.) In addition, when a negotiated settlement for remedial action is reached at an enforcement site and embodied in either an administrative order on consent or a consent decree, a public comment period of at least 30 days (except under special circumstances) is required. A 30 day comment period also is required for the ROD and before the submission of the recommendation to EPA Headquarters to delete a site from the NPL. Public comment periods of at least 3 weeks also may be necessary before conducting an operable unit for which no FS was prepared.

Accompanying Activities

A **public notice** and opportunity for a public meeting must be provided when a public comment period is held on the RI/FS and proposed plan. It is recommended that public notices and an opportunity for a public meeting be offered to the public during other comment periods. Comments received during the public comment period must be discussed in a **responsiveness summary**.

Benefits

Public comment periods allow citizens to comment on agency proposals and to have their comments incorporated into the public record.

Limitations

Public comment periods only allow indirect communication between citizens and agency officials because the formal responses to the comments may, in some cases, not be provided for some time, and comments may, in some cases, not be responded to individually. A community relations program should provide other activities that allow dialogue between agency officials and the community.

A.16 PUBLIC MEETINGS

Description

A large meeting open to the public. Experts are available to present information and answer questions. Citizens may ask questions and offer comments.

Purpose

To inform citizens of ongoing response activities, and to discuss and receive citizen feedback on the proposed course of action.

Technique

To hold public meetings:

Identify participants. In addition to agency staff, consider asking informed local officials to make a short presentation and to respond to questions.

Draw up an agenda detailing specific issues to be considered or specific tasks that must be accomplished at the meeting. If possible, involve citizens in developing the agenda.

Be sensitive to special needs of community members. For a foreign-speaking community, consider the use of simultaneous translation during the public meeting. For deaf participants, consider providing a sign language translation.

Rehearse presentations in advance. Staff unaccustomed to speaking before large audiences should practice their presentations, obtain criticism, and improve their speaking style or content.

Announce the meeting in local newspapers and broadcast media 2 weeks in advance of the scheduled date. Distribute flyers to citizens and groups interested in attending. Before the meeting begins, review the agenda with participants. Clarify that the meeting is not a formal public hearing where testimony is received. Instead, it is a meeting to exchange information and comments.

Hold a meeting in a comfortable setting. Make sure the location is easily accessible, is well-lighted, and has adequate parking and seating, especially to the handicapped.

Consider holding the meeting under the sponsorship of an existing organization. For example, conduct the meeting as a portion of a regularly scheduled city council meeting, or as a special presentation to a group such as the Rotary Club or the League of Women Voters (if sessions are open to the general public).

Begin the meeting by stating the purpose, then outline the agenda and the procedures for making statements.

Present the issues concerning the site, preliminary findings, and proposed course of action. Keep agency presentations short (20 minutes) to allow plenty of time for citizen testimony and a question-and-answer session. Allocate a time period for citizens to express their concerns and ask questions. Meetings may last from 1 hour to no more than 3.

Consider different formats for the meeting to encourage information exchange. Not all meetings need to be run formally from a platform in front of the room. Alternative formats -- such as having a moderator circulating through the audience to solicit comments -- may encourage greater participation in the meeting.

Prepare a transcript of the meeting that will be publicly available. Announce at the end of the meeting how the transcript can be obtained.

When to Conduct

The agency must provide the opportunity for a public meeting before adopting a plan for remedial action or ROD. Generally, this meeting should take place during the public comment period on the RI/FS and proposed plan. Other suitable times for a public meeting include when a site has been placed on the NPL, when the remedial design has been completed, or just before construction. Public meetings may also be used to present the technical workplan to the community.

Accompanying Activities

A **public notice** may be used to announce public meetings. **Fact sheets** should be distributed at public meetings, if possible. A transcript of the public meeting held during the **public comment period** on the proposed plan and RI/FS report must be made available to the public in the administrative record.

Benefits

Public meetings allow the public to express its concerns to the agency or to local government officials. Meetings also allow the agency to present information on a proposed course of action. Public meetings can provide a setting for the agency and community to resolve their differences.

Limitations

Public meetings may not be the best way to obtain citizen input. If controversy surrounding the site has escalated, a public meeting can intensify conflicts rather than resolve them. Evaluate the usefulness of a public meeting by reviewing the site's history and level of citizen involvement in this and similar controversies. If public meetings have been failures in the past, then use an alternative method, such as small group meetings, to transmit information and obtain feedback. Or, schedule a public hearing that is highly structured.

A.17 PUBLIC NOTICES

Description

Advertisements, usually a display ad, published in major local newspapers, broadcast via local radio stations, or sent as individual mailings to announce agency decisions, major project milestones, public meetings, or to solicit public comment on agency actions.

Purpose

To provide an official announcement of agency activities and plans and to encourage public involvement in agency decisions.

Technique

To prepare a public notice:

Identify the community to be reached by the notice. In some cases, there may be only a small group of people adjacent to the site that will need to be informed of site activities. In such cases, a display ad in a local or community newspaper or a mailing may be more appropriate than a city-wide radio broadcast.

Identify the major media contacts. While there may be many newspapers, newsletters, local radio stations, or even television stations serving a particular area, use only one or two for the public notice. In general, the newspaper with the widest circulation and greatest visibility will reach the most people and elicit the greatest response.

Take into account publication schedules. Many local or community newspapers are published on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. This may make it difficult to coordinate the publication of the notice with the event. In such a case, consider using a city-wide newspaper that is published more frequently.

Announce dates, times, and locations clearly in the public notice. When scheduling an event, make sure that the date and time do not conflict with other public meetings or holidays.

Provide ample notice. Provide at least one week's notice to ensure the greatest level of participation possible. Two weeks notice is recommended for public comment periods. Be sure to state the opening and closing dates for the comment period.

Provide the name, address, and telephone number of the contact person for more information. For notices that announce the beginning of an RI/FS, include the location of the information repository. A clip-out coupon may be added, allowing interested parties to send their names and addresses to the agency to obtain a fact sheet and/or be placed on the mailing list.

When to Conduct

A public notice **must** be provided:

- When the RI/FS and proposed plan become available;
- When a public comment period is held on the RI/FS and proposed plan;
- When the response action has been selected; and
- Whenever remedial action is taken or a settlement or consent decree entered into that differs significantly from the final remedial plan adopted by the agency.

In addition, a public notice may be used to announce:

- The beginning of the RI;
- Availability of the administrative record and information repositories;
- Emergency response actions;
- The beginning of an operable unit;
- Enforcement actions involving PRPs;
- An RI/FS "kickoff" public meeting;
- The availability of an engineering design fact sheet; and
- Other public meetings.

Accompanying Activities

Public notices should announce the availability of **fact sheets**, as well as the scheduling of **public comment periods** and **public meetings**.

Benefits

Public notices are an efficient, simple means of alerting the public to important events.

Limitations

Public notices should never substitute other activities that involve direct communication with the public.

A.18 RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARIES

Description

A summary of the written or oral comments made by the public, including PRPs, on key agency documents and agency responses to those comments. The responsiveness summary is required as a component of the ROD.

Purpose

To document any public concerns and issues and how the agency responded.

Technique

Refer to Chapters 2 and 4 of this handbook for discussion of a responsiveness summary and to Appendix C for a model summary.

When to Conduct

EPA policy requires preparing a responsiveness summary for any response action where a ROD is needed. Responsiveness summaries should be prepared for NPL site addition or deletion submissions.

Accompanying Activities

Responsiveness summaries should document oral or written citizen input submitted at **public meetings, public hearings**, or during **public comment periods**, as well as major issues and concerns raised during a response action.

Benefits

The agency responsible for the site response should have a clear record of community concerns about the site so that this information can be considered in selecting the appropriate response. The summary is also an aid to evaluating past community relations efforts and planning for subsequent activities during remedial design and remedial action.

Limitations

The responsiveness summary should not be viewed as a substitute for other community relations techniques. In addition, it should not be a point-by-point recitation of each comment: For example, potentially responsible parties may submit very detailed and technical comments that require lengthy responses. It may be advisable to prepare those responses in one document which is placed in the administrative record and repository(ies), then prepare a summary of those responses for the responsiveness summary. Refer to Chapter 4 of this handbook for further information.

A.19 REVISION OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLANS

Description

Revisions of all or parts of the CRP for a site to incorporate new information, reflect changes in community concern, or prepare for community activities during remedial design and remedial action.

Purpose

To ensure that the CRP remains sensitive to citizens' concerns through final phases of the remedial action. To evaluate which community relations activities were effective, and which were not.

Technique

A CRP initially outlines the community relations program techniques for the RI/FS phase of the remedial action. Once the ROD for a site is completed, it is appropriate to re-assess the nature and extent of community concerns and to develop a new schedule of community relations activities for the design and construction phases of the remedial action. Revisions needed will vary from site to site.

When to Conduct

CRPs should be revised before the remedial design begins if the RD/RA is not already addressed in the CRP. If, after the plan has been prepared, community concerns change focus or increase in intensity, the plan should be revised accordingly.

Accompanying Activities

The **responsiveness summary** will provide some information to assess the nature and extent of citizens' concerns after the RI/FS is completed. Additional **community interviews** can provide further information for revising the CRP. Chapter 3 provides additional, detailed information on conducting interviews and developing plans.

Benefits

Revising the CRP will help to ensure that the agency continues to respond to citizens' concerns during remedial design and action. Simple changes can also help a community relations planner; for example, the contacts list can incorporate changes in addresses, new telephone numbers, and the names of new officials.

Limitations

Agency staff should make certain that there resources are available to implement all activities identified in the revision.

A.20 SITE TOURS

Description

Scheduled trips to the site for media representatives, local officials, and citizens during which technical and community relations staff answer questions.

Purpose

To increase understanding of the nature of the problems at a site and the response action proposed or underway.

Technique

To conduct site tours:

Draw up a list of individuals that might be interested in participating in a tour, including:

- Individual citizens or nearby residents who have expressed concern about the site;
- Representatives of public interest or environmental groups that have expressed interest in the site;
- Interested local officials;
- Representatives of local citizen or service groups; and
- Representatives of local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations.

Determine the maximum number that can be taken on site safely. Keep the group small so that all who wish to ask questions may do so. Schedule additional tours as needed.

Think of ways to involve tour participants. A "hands-on" demonstration of how to read monitoring devices is one example.

Anticipate questions. Have someone available to answer technical questions in non-technical terms.

Ensure that the tour complies with the safety plan for the site.

When to Conduct

Conditions permitting, tours can be conducted at any site where citizens or local officials have expressed an interest. Site tours may be particularly appropriate during or after the construction phase, so that citizens can see a response action in progress.

If possible, arrange tours at nearby Superfund sites. Residents may benefit from touring a site that has similar contamination problems or where similar cleanup technologies have been applied. Touring a nearby Superfund site can give residents a clearer perception of what to expect at their own site.

Accompanying Activities

Fact sheets complementing presentations given on site tours can be distributed to all tour participants. An **observation deck** near the site would allow them to watch the progress of the cleanup activities on their own.

Benefits

Site tours familiarize the media, local officials, and citizens with the site and the individuals involved in cleanup operations. Unreasonable fears about the risks of the site may be dispelled, as might suspicion of remedial crews working at the site. The result could be better understanding between the community and the agency.

Limitations

Site tours require considerable staff time to prepare the explanation of site activities and to escort citizens through the site. Staff may have difficulty gaining site access for non-agency people.

A.21 SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Description

Meetings of small groups held in private homes or in local meeting places at which agency staff responsible for the site get first-hand information from interested citizens and State and local officials.

Purpose

To inform citizens and State and local officials of site activities, answer questions, and clear up any misconceptions or misunderstandings. To develop agency sensitivity to citizen concerns and establish rapport and a good working relationship with residents.

Technique

To conduct small group meetings:

Identify interested citizens and officials. Contact each citizen group and local agency that is directly affected by site activities, or contact individuals who have expressed great concern regarding site activities. Offer to discuss cleanup plans at a convenient time. For a removal action, schedule the meeting after emergency actions are completed or after the agency has accurate information to share with the citizens. For a remedial action, determine first when community concerns may be highest and schedule meetings accordingly. For instance, when the draft FS report is released may be an appropriate time to hold a small group meeting.

Limit attendance. Restrict attendance to between 5 and 20 individuals. The larger the group, the less likely that some people will candidly express their concerns. Establishing rapport with individuals in a large group is also more difficult. If a greater number of citizens and officials are interested, schedule additional small meetings.

Select a meeting date, time, and place conducive to two-way interaction. The meeting place should have chairs that can be arranged into a circle, or some other informal setting. If citizens will not be able to meet during working hours, schedule meetings in the evening. A private home or public library meeting room may be more conducive to an exchange of ideas than a large or formal public hall. When scheduling the meeting, make sure that the date and time do not conflict with other public meetings that citizens may want to attend (for example, town council meetings), or with holidays or other special occasions. Be sure that the meeting location does not conflict with State "sunshine laws." (For instance, a State may require holding all meetings between agency officials and the public in a public location.) In selecting a public meeting place, be attentive to the special needs of handicapped individuals (e.g., access ramps or elevators).

Begin with an overview of current and future site activities. Keep it brief (no more than a few minutes) and informal, to promote open discussion. Cover such issues as:

- Extent of cleanup;
- Safety and health implications;
- Factors that might speed up or delay the cleanup; and
- How community concerns are considered in making decisions on response actions.

Identify the major agencies and individuals responsible for the site cleanup. Citizens will then know where to direct further questions or voice new ideas or suggestions.

Gear the discussion to the audience. Discuss problems in technical terms only if citizens are knowledgeable.

Listen. Find out what the citizens want done. Some concerns may be met by making minor changes in the agency's proposed action. Discuss the possibility for compromise or explain the reasons why citizen requests appear to be unworkable or conflict with program or legal requirements.

Follow-up on any major concerns. Stay in touch with the groups and contact any new groups that have formed, so that new or increasing concerns can be dealt with before problems develop.

When to Conduct

Small group meetings can be used effectively during virtually all phases of a Superfund remedial response: the RI/FS, remedial design, remedial action, and O&M phases. (Community awareness or concern during preliminary assessment and site investigation phases may not warrant holding small group meetings. If community interest is expressed, however, hold small group meetings.) These meetings can also provide a forum for explaining how unexpected events may affect the project schedule.

Small group meetings are also appropriate during removal actions.

Accompanying Activities

Community interviews usually precede these meetings, since it is during these on-site interviews that concerned citizens groups are identified and contacted. Possible meeting locations are also identified during the community interviews.

Distributing **fact sheets** at these meetings may also be appropriate, depending on when they are held.

Benefits

The primary benefit of small group meetings is that they allow two-way interaction between citizens, local officials, and the agency. Not only will citizens be informed about the proposed response, but officials responsible for the site can learn how citizens view the site.

Small group meetings also add a personal dimension to what could otherwise be treated as a purely technical problem. Familiarity with how the remedy is selected can assist citizens in understanding the Superfund process and promote their participation.

Limitations

Small group meetings may require a day or more of staff time to reach a limited number of citizens.

One pitfall is that some citizens or environmental groups may perceive the agency's efforts to restrict the number of attendees as a "divide and conquer" tactic to prevent large groups from exerting influence on potential actions and to exclude certain individuals or groups. One way to prevent this perception is to hold additional small group meetings with those organizations who express concern about being left out of the process.

Irate groups or individuals may also accuse agency staff of telling different stories to different groups at these small meetings. The agency can avoid this criticism by inviting a cross-section of interests to each small meeting. Alternatively, agency staff can keep a written record of the small group discussions and make it available upon request. A record of discussions is required for meetings during the public comment period.

A.22 SUPERFUND BRIEFING BOOK

Description

A notebook of information about a site and the Superfund program that is distributed to the media. Included in the notebook might be a site history, the RI report, the FS report, and Superfund fact sheets.

Purpose

To ensure that complete and accurate information about a Superfund site and the Superfund program is available to the press. To minimize inaccurate statements in the media.

Technique

To prepare a Superfund briefing book:

Compile site-specific information that could be used by reporters in their stories about a site, including site history, extent of community concern and involvement, and an up-to-date accounting of all site samples, analyses conducted, and actions proposed.

Compile generic information including descriptions of CERCLA, the NPL, and all steps in a Superfund cleanup process (from preliminary assessment/site investigation through O&M). Include a separate discussion of opportunities for public participation throughout the Superfund cleanup process.

Much of this information will already be available in other public documents -- for example, the CRP and technical workplans. To present other information in a concise format (for instance, results of key sampling studies), brief fact sheets may be appropriate.

When to Conduct

Superfund briefing books should be compiled at the beginning of the RI/FS, and updated throughout the life of the project. It is a good idea to compile briefing books for all sites, even if community concern seems low.

Accompanying Activities

Media representatives can be invited to review briefing books at the end of **news conferences**. Announcements about the briefing books can be included in **news releases**. A briefing book could be placed on reserve at the **information repository**.

Benefits

A Superfund briefing book will help to ensure that consistent and accurate information is presented to the media. The briefing book can also show willingness to cooperate, thereby helping to foster good relations with the media.

Limitations

To be useful, the briefing book should be up-to-date and accurate. This will require periodic reviews of the briefing book by agency staff.

A.23 TECHNICAL ADVISOR

* * * * * RESERVED * * * * *

A.24 TELEPHONE CONTACTS

Description

Initial telephone calls to State and local officials and concerned citizens, informing them of the agency's interest in the site, finding out which individuals or groups are involved with the site, and possibly setting up personal interviews for a later date. Once site activities are underway, follow-up telephone calls should be made to State and local officials and key community groups and individuals to inform them of any major findings and the progress of site activities. **Telephone contacts supplement, but do not replace, community interviews as a way of gathering information about the community**.

Purpose

To understand community concern about a response action and gather information for planning the response. To inform key officials and community groups promptly about site activities.

Technique

In making telephone contacts:

Know exactly what information to request (e.g., additional references, site specifics, background information) and tailor questions accordingly. Information to solicit from these contacts might include:

- Background on the site and the problem;
- Recent government activities at the site;
- Nature and extent of citizen involvement;
- Names and telephone numbers of other possible contacts; and
- Addresses for compiling mailing lists.

Identify concerned citizens in the affected communities. State and local government agencies are one source of such information. The media and local chapters of environmental groups are another source.

These organizations may be contacted to obtain names and phone numbers of concerned citizens and groups:

- **State and local health departments**: Officials may have received complaints from citizens concerning the safety of a site. They may also know about community groups involved in hazardous substance problems in the State.

- **State and local environmental or pollution control agencies**: Often, local residents and community groups will have contacted these offices seeking answers to questions about potential health and safety effects of contaminants found at the site. These officials can also assess citizen expectations.

- **Local Congressional office**: Staff may have received letters or phone calls from concerned citizens regarding the site.

- **State elected officials**: Some may have been contacted by concerned constituents.

- **Local elected officials** (mayors, city managers, etc.): These officials can identify concerned citizens, and what steps, if any, have been taken to satisfy their needs.

- **Media**: Reporters at local TV and radio stations and papers can frequently identify community organizations or individuals interested in the site.

- **Environmental groups**: Local chapters of environmental organizations may have members who are monitoring site activities.

Once concerned citizens have been identified, they should be telephoned. If possible, agency staff should also arrange a personal interview to discuss their concerns in detail.

When to Conduct

Initial telephone contacts should be used in the earliest phases of both removal and remedial actions to identify key officials and citizens who have a high interest in the site. After these initial contacts are made, EPA may make telephone calls throughout the response action to inform these individuals and to monitor the extent of community concerns.

Telephone contacts are also an appropriate activity for gathering information during the preliminary assessment and site investigation phases.

Accompanying Activities

Telephone contacts are usually made to arrange on-site **community interviews**.

Benefits

Telephone calls can be an inexpensive and expedient method of acquiring initial information about the site. During removals, the telephone contacts can help the OSC identify and deal with community concern when time is not available for more thorough community relations activities. In remedial response actions, telephone interviews will often be useful for establishing a network of contacts to be used later during community interviews. Once the initial information has been gathered, telephone contacts are a quick means of informing key people about site activities and for monitoring any shifts in community concerns.

Limitations

Residents may initially feel uncomfortable discussing their concerns and perceptions over the phone with a "faceless" questioner. Once residents have met EPA staff in person, however, they may be more open and willing to discuss their concerns during follow-up telephone calls.

A.25 TELEPHONE HOTLINE

Description

A toll-free telephone number in an agency office.

Purpose

To provide citizens with an opportunity to ask questions and obtain information promptly about site activities.

Technique

To install a telephone hotline, either as a "permanent" fixture, available throughout the cleanup action, or as a temporary measure, installed at the time of major project milestones:

Assign one or more staff members to handle the hotline calls. Consider installing more than one line to minimize citizens reaching a busy signal when they call. If staff are not available throughout the day, install an answering machine directing citizens to leave their name, number, and brief statement of concern, and informing them that an agency official will return their call promptly. Check the answering machine for messages at least once a day. If the level of concern is high, check for messages more frequently.

Announce the telephone hotline in news releases to local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations.

Keep a written record of each question, when it was received, and how and when it was answered.

When to Conduct

A telephone hotline would be useful during the RI, if concern is high about the levels of contaminants at the site. A hotline is particularly useful if any unexpected event, such as a fire or explosion, occurs at a site. A hotline can also be effective during the construction phase, when citizens may have complaints regarding environmental impacts such as excessive dust or noise.

Accompanying Activities

One of the functions of the **contact person** might be to respond to inquiries on the hotline.

Benefits

A hotline can provide citizens with a relatively quick means of expressing their concerns directly to the agency and getting their questions answered. This quick response can help to reassure citizens that the agency is listening to their concerns. A telephone hotline can also help to monitor community concerns. A sudden increase in calls could indicate that additional community relations efforts may be warranted.

Limitations

Citizens calling the hotline must receive responses to their questions or concerns quickly, or they may become frustrated with the agency. If the number of calls is large, responding quickly to each inquiry could prove burdensome to agency staff. Furthermore, hearing a recorded message on the hotline could irritate or alienate some callers.

A.26 TELEPHONE NETWORK/PHONE TREE

Description

A list of individuals responsible for calling a specified number of people who, in turn, call an additional number of people to inform them of site activities. A telephone network or "phone tree" may be a formal, tiered system of contacting individuals about an upcoming event or a more informal system of "spreading the word."

Purpose

To provide back-up information or reminder of plans already announced. To reduce the number of calls made by individual staff members.

Technique

To set up a telephone tree:

Identify members of key groups or organizations willing to make telephone calls (no more than ten calls per person) or, where there are no such organizations, develop a list of independent individuals.

Assign each caller a specified number of names that he or she will be responsible for calling.

Prepare a short written message that includes the necessary information (date, time, place, etc.) and distribute it to the first tier of callers. Be sure to include the name and telephone number of the staff contact person who is available to answer questions.

When to Conduct

This activity is best used to provide follow-up information or to reinforce information presented in a mailing or public announcement. Calls should be made 1 week to 2 days before the event to remind participants of an event or to estimate the level of attendance.

Accompanying Activities

Because this activity is intended to provide follow-up information, a **mailing list** might be used to identify individuals who should be called. Telephone networks generally should be used to reiterate announcements made by a **public notice** or by a **news release**.

Benefits

This activity is an inexpensive and personal way to reach a large number of people.

Limitations

This activity may be time-consuming to coordinate, and unreliable if there are too many tiers in the network. Information may become distorted or confused, thus creating distrust of lead agency efforts in general, and staff members in particular. Hence, a telephone network of this type is recommended only as a back-up activity following a mailing, advertisement (i.e., public notice), or other type of announcement. This activity is not recommended as a general method of disseminating information.

A.27 TRANSLATIONS

Description

Providing written or verbal information in a foreign language to a predominantly non-English speaking community. There are three types of translations:

- A written translation of materials originally written in English;
- A verbal translation of a public meeting or news conference by translating each sentence after it is spoken (i.e., sentence by sentence); and
- A simultaneous translation (i.e., word by word) of a public meeting or news conference, usually with small headsets and a radio transmitter.

Purpose

To ensure that **all** community members are informed about site activities and have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

Technique

To develop a successful translation:

Evaluate the need for a translation. Evaluate the demographic characteristics of the community as well as the type of community relations activities being planned. Consider whether citizens' ability to take part in a community relations activity is limited by their inability to speak or understand English.

Identify and evaluate translation services. A successful translation depends on the skill of the translator. More problems may be created than solved if inaccurate or imprecise information is given. Many translators will not be familiar with the technical terms associated with hazardous waste cleanup and few, if any, will be familiar with the Superfund process. This problem may be further compounded in the case of verbal translations (especially simultaneous translations) as there is no time for review or quality control. Thus, it is necessary to contract someone with experience in translating technical information. If possible, arrange to have another person, preferably a staff member who can speak or read the appropriate foreign language, check the translator's work to ensure that the content and tone are in keeping with the agency's intent.

Avoid the use of jargon or highly technical terms. As a matter of standard practice, a staff member should go over all technical and Superfund terms that may cause problems with the translator in advance.

For verbal presentations, public meetings, and news conferences, plan what to say ahead of time. If the translator has a prepared written speech to work with in advance, there is more time to work out any vocabulary "bugs" and thereby reduce the chances of faltering over unfamiliar material or making inaccurate word choices. If possible, practice with the translator before the actual meeting or presentation date.

Anticipate questions from the audience and reporters, and have at least the technical aspects (e.g., chemical names, statistics) of the answers translated in advance.

When to Conduct

A translation is desirable where a large percentage of the community is non-English speaking. A written translation should be provided for fact sheets or letters, unless a presentation or public meeting would be more appropriate (e.g., the literacy rate among the foreign-speaking community is low). Verbal translations are recommended where there is considerable concern over the site, extreme hostility, or suspicion of the lead agency's efforts to communicate with the community members.

Accompanying Activities

In predominantly non-English speaking communities, translations may accompany fact sheets, **public notices, presentations, public meetings, public hearings** and **news conferences**.

Benefits

Written translations and use of translators ensure that a greater number of community members can participate effectively in site activities and therefore provide input to decisions concerning the cleanup process. This effort assures the community of EPA's sincerity in providing opportunity for public involvement.

Limitations

Translations are very costly, especially simultaneous translations of public meetings. Sentence-by-sentence verbal translations frequently double the length of public meetings, and may make information more difficult to present effectively and smoothly. In addition, very few translators are familiar with, much less trained in, the Superfund process. For sites having highly volatile or sensitive problems, it may be difficult to communicate the lead agency's position and involve community members in a constructive dialogue.

A.28 USING EXISTING GROUPS/PUBLICATIONS

Description

Using the publications and mailing lists of established local, civic or community organizations as vehicles to inform a community of site activities.

Purpose

To communicate with the public about site activities through existing communication networks.

Technique

To use existing groups/publications:

Identify existing groups and publications. Groups that may help to publish information to the community or in organizing meetings include:

- Local civic or environmental groups;
- Rotary clubs;
- Church organizations;
- Local trade associations, farmers' associations, and cooperatives;
- The League of Woman Voters; and
- Local water companies or other independent agencies or utilities.

Some types of appropriate publications may include:

- Newsletters, newspapers, magazines, or bulletins;
- Newsletters of homeowners' associations; and
- Local/community independent or commercial newspapers.

Contact groups/editors to determine if they are willing to provide mailing lists, publish site information, or organize meetings. As important, determine whether such groups are appropriate for communicating agency information. By publishing information through a group that has a specific political interest or bias, the agency may be perceived as endorsing these views. Groups that are "friendly" may also be inappropriate if they appear to represent the agency's interests.

Make sure that the relationship between the agency and any group is clearly understood by both the group itself and by the public.

When to Conduct

While this activity is most useful in the early stages of site activity as a means of developing contacts within the community, it may also be useful throughout the site cleanup process. Using existing organizations and/or their publications ensures a regular and attentive audience.

Accompanying Activities

Existing groups and their publications may be useful for identifying individuals for purposes of **community interviews**, **mailing lists**, and **door-to-door canvassing** efforts.

Benefits

The principal benefit of using the mailing lists or publications of existing organizations is that the agency has access to an established communication network. Less time and expense will be needed to develop mailing lists and to organize meetings.

Limitations

Working too closely with existing groups, or working exclusively with just one group, may be misperceived by other groups within the community.

A.29 WORKSHOPS

Description

Seminars or a series of meetings to discuss hazardous substance issues; to allow citizens to comment on proposed response actions; and to provide information on the technical issues associated with the site and the Superfund program in general. Experts may be invited to explain the problems associated with releases of hazardous substances and possible remedies for these problems.

Purpose

To improve the public's understanding of the hazardous substance problem at the site and to prevent or correct misconceptions. To enable agency staff to identify citizen concerns and to receive citizen comments.

Technique

To conduct a workshop:

Plan the workshop. Decide ahead of time on a minimum and maximum number of participants. If there are too few, consider holding an informal meeting and postpone the workshop until additional interest develops. Identify a convenient location and time for the workshop, and set a date that does not conflict with other important meetings or interests (for example, town council meetings, high school basketball games).

Announce the workshop by publishing a notice well in advance (at least 3 weeks) in the local newspapers. Send notice of workshops with mailings to all citizens on site mailing list and distribute posters around town. Send out invitations and registration forms to concerned citizens. Provide for multiple registrations on each form to accommodate friends who might also be interested in the workshop. Emphasize that the number of participants is limited, and provide a deadline for registration.

Cover the following topics:

- Nature of release problems;
- Methods of containing and cleaning up release, and monitoring the cleanup;
- Identification of health or environmental problems; and/or
- Method and format for receiving citizen comments on the proposed or ongoing response.

When to Conduct

Workshops are appropriate for presenting technical information to citizens, such as the draft FS. Workshops could also be useful when a site is first proposed for the NPL; to inform citizens about the Superfund cleanup process; and to increase their understanding of potential risks associated with the site.

Accompanying Activities

Workshops can be conducted before **formal public hearings** or during **public comment periods** to give citizens some ideas on developing and presenting testimony. **Fact sheets** and **exhibits** can be used at workshops.

Benefits

Workshops provide more information to the public than is possible through fact sheets or other written materials. Workshops have proven successful in familiarizing citizens with key technical terms and concepts before a public meeting. Workshops also allow two-way communication, making them particularly good for reaching opinion leaders, interest group leaders, and the affected public.

Limitations

Workshops can reach only a small segment of the affected population, if only a limited number are held.

When planning a workshop, agency staff should make sure that it is announced in local newspapers, to help ensure that it will be well-attended. In addition, it may be helpful to specifically invite all residents who have expressed an interest in the site.

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR AND SAMPLE COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

I. SUGGESTED FORMAT

A. Overview of Community Relations Plan

Purpose: Provide a general introduction by briefly stating the purpose of the community relations plan and the distinctive or central features of the community relations program planned for this specific site. Also note any special circumstances that the plan has been designed to address. Do not repeat general program goals (e.g., "Keep the community informed").

Length: One paragraph to several pages.

B. Capsule Site Description

Purpose: Provide the historical, geographical, and technical details necessary to show why the site was put on the NPL.

Suggested topics:

- Site location and proximity to other landmarks;
- History of site use and ownership;
- Date and type of release;
- Nature of threat to public health and environment; and
- Responsibility for site (e.g., State- or Federal-lead).

Length: One page.

C. Community Background

Purpose: Describe the community and its involvement with the site. Cover three topics:

1. Community Profile: the economic and political structure of the community, and key community issues and interests.
2. Chronology of Community Involvement: how the community has reacted to the site in the past, actions taken by citizens, and attitudes toward government roles and responsibilities. Discuss actions taken by any government agencies or government officials, such as public meetings or news releases.

3. Key Community Concerns: how the community regards the risks posed by the site or the remedial process used to address those risks. One approach: break down the analysis by community group or segment (i.e., public environmental interest groups; nearby residents; and elected officials).

In all three sections, but particularly in the last, focus on the community's perceptions of the events and problems at the site, and not on the technical history of the site.

Length: From three to seven pages, depending on the history and level of community involvement in the site.

D. Highlights of Program

Purpose: Provide concrete details on community relations approaches to be taken, which should follow directly and logically from Section C's discussion of the community and its perceptions of the problems posed by the site. Do not restate the goals or objectives of conducting community relations at Superfund sites. Instead, develop a strategy for communicating with a specific community.

Suggested topics:

- Resources to be used in the community relations program (e.g., local organizations, meeting places);
- Key individuals or organizations that will play a role in community relations activities;
- Areas of sensitivity that must be considered in conducting community relations.

E. Techniques and Timing

Purpose: State what community relations activities will be conducted at the site and when. Suggest additional techniques that might be used at the site as the response action proceeds, and when they are likely to be most effective.

Length: Two to three pages. Matrix format may be suitable.

Appendices

- Mailing List of Interested Parties and Key Contacts*
- Suggested Locations of Meetings and Information Repositories

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*(Names and addresses of individuals should not be included in the the community relations plan that is made available in the information repository for public review. Names and addresses should, however, be compiled for a mailing list as part of the Community Relations Coordinator's files.)

II. SAMPLE PLAN

The following community relations plan for the Sludge Pond site in Woodbury, Connecticut is intended to illustrate the suggested format and content of community relations plans, as discussed in Chapter 3 of this handbook. While the plan is based on actual community interviews conducted for a Superfund remedial site, names, locations, and technical details have been changed so that the plan should be viewed as an illustration only.

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

SLUDGE POND SITE, WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT

A. OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

This community relations plan identifies issues of community concern regarding the Sludge Pond Superfund site in Woodbury, Connecticut, and outlines community relations activities to be conducted during the remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) of the site. In general, community concern about the site is low; having known for almost 40 years that the site was a source of contamination, residents appear more or less resigned to its presence in their community. The start of remedial activity at the site, however, is likely to reawaken the concern of the community. An effective community relations program for this site should, therefore, prepare for this potential revival of community interest and attempt to educate, without alarming, residents so that they can better understand the Superfund remedial process. In particular, the community relations program for Sludge Pond should enlist the support and cooperation of the town and county officials of Woodbury. These individuals have a long-standing familiarity with the area and its residents and hold visible positions of responsibility within the community; therefore they should be considered as a key resource in the effort to communicate openly and effectively with the people of Woodbury.

This draft community relations plan has been prepared to aid EPA in developing a community relations program tailored to the needs of the community affected by the Sludge Pond site. EPA conducts community relations activities to ensure that the local public has input to decisions about Superfund actions and is well-informed about the progress of those actions. These sections follow:

- Capsule Site Description
- Community Background
- Highlights of Program

- o Techniques and Timing
- o Attachments: List of Contacts and Interested Parties and Locations for Information Repository and Public Meeting

The information in this plan is based primarily on discussions conducted in Litchfield County, Connecticut, in August 1985, with the District Health Department, officials from the Litchfield County Office of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the first selectman of Woodbury Township, a Litchfield County Commissioner, and residents of Woodbury and Watertown Townships. The "Preliminary Investigation Report/Lewis Iron Works Site," prepared by contractors to Eastern Manufacturing Co., also provided valuable information.[1]

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region I Office has lead responsibility for managing this RI/FS; the EPA Region I Office of Public Affairs will oversee all community relations activities at the site. The Office of Community Involvement in the Ground Water Quality Division at DEP will play a major role in implementing community relations activities.

B. CAPSULE SITE DESCRIPTION

The Sludge Pond site is located on a 40-acre tract of land in Litchfield County, Connecticut, one mile south of Woodbury Township on Route 6. (Exhibits 1 and 2 illustrate the location of the site within the state, and surrounding geographical landmarks.) To the north is Tanner Lake, used for fishing and swimming. The closest residences are approximately one-quarter mile to the northwest and west across Route 6.

From 1886 to 1945, the site was used by Lewis Iron Works, a major producer of charcoal, pig iron, and organic chemicals. Liquid tar residues from chemical processing were discharged into a 2-acre depression on site, giving to the area its current name of "Sludge Pond." Lewis Iron Works shut down its chemical operations in early 1944, ceased operations entirely in 1945. Among the current owners of the site property are Eastern Manufacturing Co., whose nearby plant produces automotive parts; the Wilson Lumber Co.; and the township of Woodbury, which operated an 8-acre municipal landfill adjacent to Sludge Pond from 1961 to 1969.

In the late 1940s, shortly after the closing of the Iron Works, residents as far away as 3 miles from the site reported that their well water had a "chemical taste and bad odor." Samples taken by the Connecticut Geological

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[1] This, as well as other technical reports (such as the RI/FS workplan), will be made available at the information repository to be established in Woodbury. These reports will give full details of the type and extent of the problems at Sludge Pond.

Exhibit 1

SITE LOCATION MAP
SLUDGE POND SITE
LITCHFIELD COUNTY, CONNECTICUT

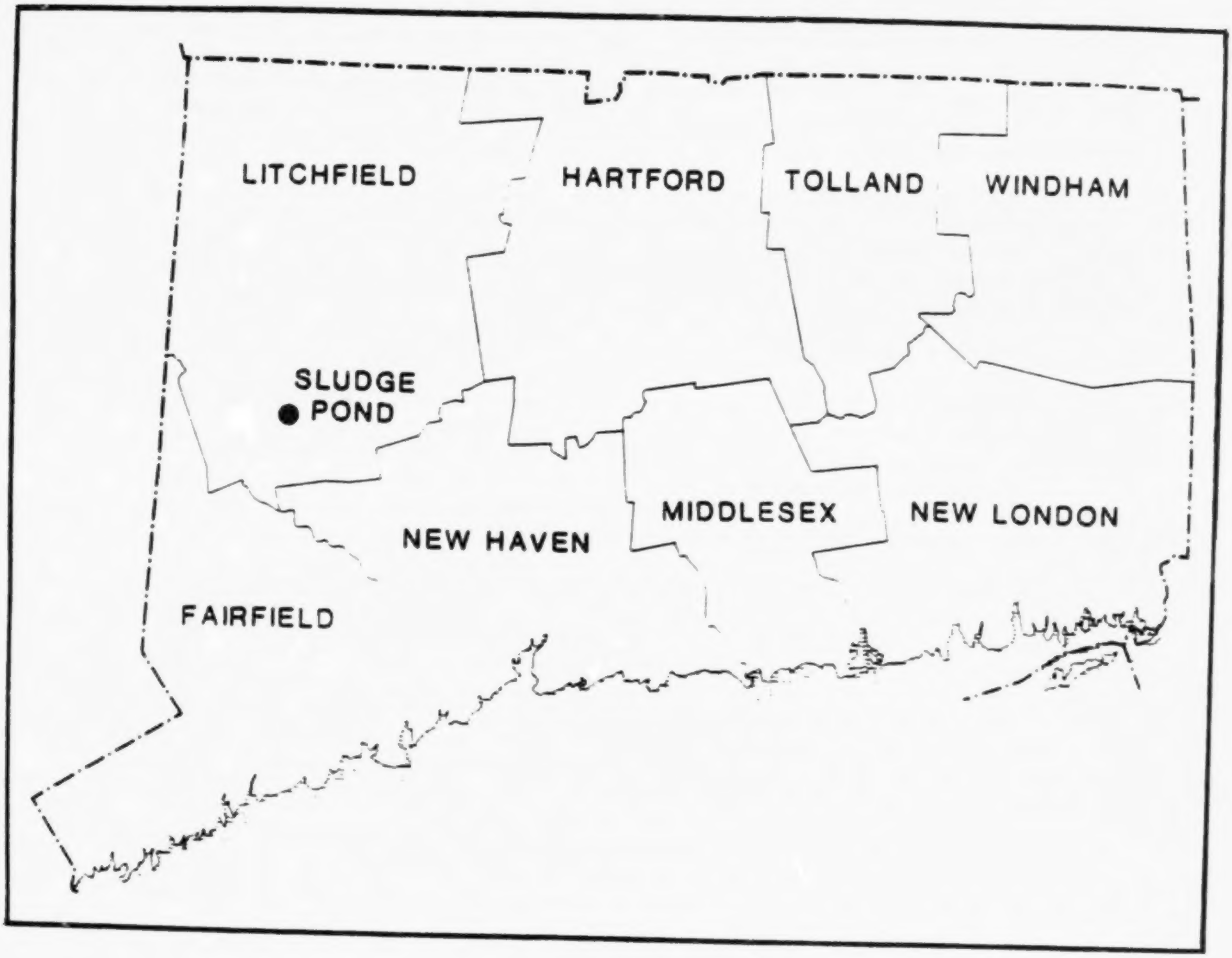
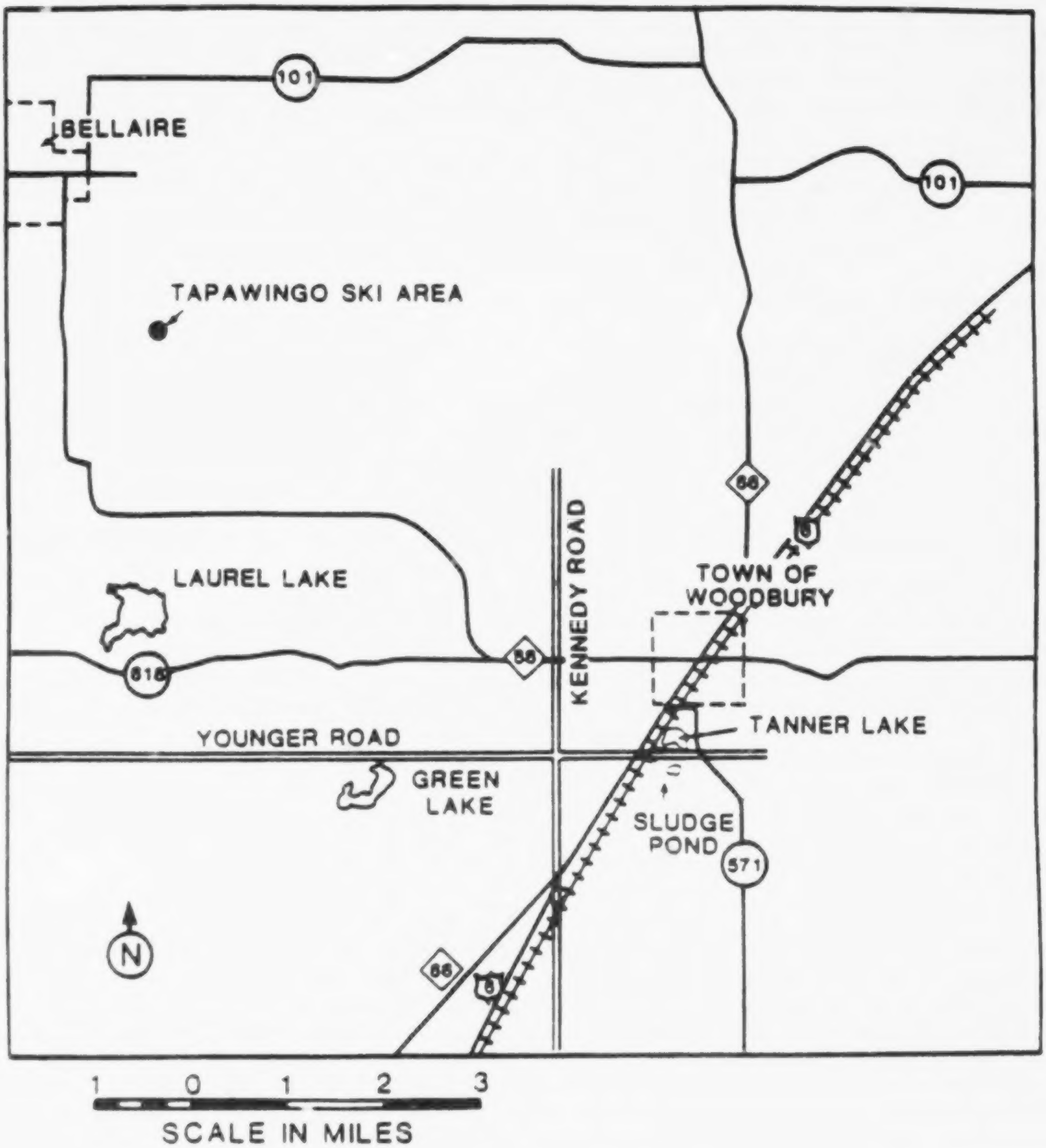

LITCHFIELD
HARTFORD
TOLLAND
WINDHAM
SLUDGE POND
MIDDLESEX
NEW LONDON
NEW HAVEN
FAIRFIELD

Exhibit 2

SLUDGE POND SITE VICINITY MAP


101
BELLAIRE
101
TAPAWINGO SKI AREA
66
6
LAUREL LAKE
TOWN OF WOODBURY
618
66
KENNEDY ROAD
TANNER LAKE
YOUNGER ROAD
GREEN LAKE
SLUDGE POND
571
N
66
6
1 0 1 2 3
SCALE IN MILES

Study in 1949 indicated that phenol had contaminated eight private wells, to the west and northwest of Sludge Pond. In the 1960s, the surface sludges on site caught fire and burned out of control for several weeks.

Limited water sampling conducted since 1980 has confirmed the 1949 findings of phenol in the ground water. In addition, DEP found evidence of heavy metals in Sludge Pond in 1980. Heavy metals, however, were not confirmed by monitoring samples taken by EPA's Field Investigation Team in 1982, or by on-site testing conducted by Eastern Manufacturing in 1983. After private wells were tested by DEP and the District Health Department in 1980, residents were told that their water was drinkable.

Sludge Pond was proposed for the National Priorities List (NPL) in December 1982. The site has recently been designated a Fund-lead site for the RI/FS, although enforcement proceedings are underway against Eastern Manufacturing.

C. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

1. Community Profile

The Township of Woodbury, named for the abundance of trees in the area, developed in the 1820s as settlers journeyed to western Connecticut in search of farmland. However, because of the town's fairly remote location, industry did not begin to develop in the area until about a half-century later. In 1882, George Lewis - an area entrepreneur - erected a blast furnace to manufacture charcoals, and the Lewis Iron Works soon became the area's largest employer.

Several Woodbury residents interviewed for this plan recalled the days when their relatives or neighbors worked at the Iron Works, and old photographs of the company's vast lumber stocks and furnace can still be seen in the local library and on the walls of the town office building.

Since the closing of the Iron Works, major sources of employment in the area have included light industry and farming. Local craft industries dating from the early nineteenth century continue to flourish in the area, as do antique stores and clock shops. Dairy and poultry farms occupy a significant portion of the land in Litchfield County and nearby Hartford county.

In general, however, Woodbury Township remains a quiet, rural area, somewhat insulated from the industrial development to the south and east. Judging from individuals interviewed for this plan, many town members have been long-time residents in the area, and the township's small population (7,000 reported in the 1980 Census) has meant that local officials know, and are known by, most of the area's residents. A significant number of senior citizens in the community; aging issues and facilities for the elderly have been prominent concerns in the community, and according to the township clerk, a central meeting place in the area is the Litchfield County Senior Center.

2. Chronology of Community Involvement

Local officials have described community reaction to the proximity of an NPL site as "quiet," particularly in the past year. The District Health Department receives only infrequent inquiries about the safety of private well water which, according to users, is a brownish-orange color and stains bathroom fixtures and laundry. The last call was received at the beginning of the summer of 1985 from a prospective home builder who was concerned about the condition of the ground water directly south of Sludge Pond. Because ground water flows west from the site -- and, in the opinion of some local officials, is confined to a narrow finger of an aquifer -- the Health Department assured the caller that his property was not threatened by contamination from the site.

The level of community concern, while never high, reached a peak in the early 1980s, when DEP analyzed sludges from Sludge Pond and water from a number of private wells. Early in 1980, a local farmer with contaminated well water wrote to the District Health Department after reading an article in the Waterbury Republican about the suspected hazards at the site. She was concerned because guests could not drink her water, though she herself was accustomed to its distinctive taste. When interviewed, this same resident stated that she and her husband knew about the problems with their well when they purchased their house and farm, and in fact were able to buy the property at a reduced price because of the discolored water.

Also in 1980, the Township of Woodbury took over and began rebuilding a town water system from an independent water company. A major part of this project, which was financed through loans and grants from the Farmers' Home Administration, was the replacement of leaking wooden main pipes. Some community members also attempted to obtain a Health Department grant to have the water mains extended to the residents with private wells who had bad well water. According to a County Commissioner, obtaining funds from the Health Department for this extension required demonstrating that the water was not fit for drinking. Because this was never done, the Township was unable to finance an extended water system. While affected citizens could conceivably put in their own pipes to connect to the town water system, this option appears to be well beyond the means of individual residents.

Shortly after the site was listed on the NPL in December 1982, the Litchfield County Herald ran an article identifying Sludge Pond as one of "EPA's 400 Worst." Though several residents could recall the article, the classification of Sludge Pond as a Superfund site did not particularly alarm residents or motivate them to take organized action. No community groups have been formed to participate in the investigation of the site, or to voice an opinion as to how the site should or could be addressed. In general, affected residents have dealt with the problem of contaminated well water in fairly quiet and individual ways: some carry bottles of municipal water home for drinking, and take extra measures (e.g., filtering and bleaching) to prevent staining of laundry. From the point of view of local officials, a far more urgent issue is the potential closure of the Litchfield-Berkshire municipal landfill after DEP found contamination in monitoring wells at the landfill. Because closure would mean that area waste would have to be transported further away, local officials are particularly concerned that some citizens will resort to dumping refuse on back roads rather than paying the higher transporting fees.

3. Key Community Concerns

Currently, as throughout the past 5 years, community concern about contamination from Sludge Pond is fairly low, possibly because:

- Citizens have lived with the knowledge that Sludge Pond was contaminated for a long period of time.

- Citizens view the contamination primarily as a nuisance, but not as a public health hazard. Residents rely on the fact that DEP and the Health Department have never declared the water undrinkable.

- Only a few residents are affected, and their houses are scattered over farmland about 2 miles northwest from the site. In conversations with community members, about 6 families were mentioned as having had problems with their private wells. At least two families have moved to homes on the municipal water supply; another family had problems only when it installed a well before being connected to the municipal water system.

Current low level of community concern about Sludge Pond should not be construed as lack of interest. Citizens are not indifferent to the environmental problem posed by Sludge Pond; their attitude might be more accurately characterized as resigned. In their view, the problem is intractable. According to one resident, because such large quantities of sludge were once deposited on site, it would literally take moving a small mountain to eliminate the years' accumulation of waste. Furthermore, many residents consider their community too rural and economically insignificant to command Federal attention or funds for a cleanup.

The start of the Sludge Pond RI/FS is bound to change this attitude of resignation. The arrival on site of investigation teams, and discussion of alternatives during the FS may cause people to consider that perhaps the problems at Sludge Pond can be solved and are worthy of being addressed. In developing a community relations program for this site, it is important to anticipate this potential for renewed community interest. The following kinds of concern, voiced individually and in a low key manner during community interviews, are likely to become more visible and pressing during the RI/FS:

- **Property Values**: Some residents have suffered losses in the market value of their property as a result of ground-water contamination in the area. When one resident put his property up for sale, he was told by the realtor that the listing had to carry a statement that his well water was contaminated. He has been unable to sell his property, despite a substantial decrease in his asking price, and has had to go into debt to purchase a new home.

- **Inconvenience**: Contaminated well water has inconvenienced residents in a number of ways: they must carry bottled water to their homes from the homes of friends or relatives on municipal water, and take extra measures with their laundry. There is also the problem of the water having a bad odor. One resident claims her plumbing has been affected by the contaminants in her water. One resident complained of a rash that did not heal while she was using private well water, but in general it appears that citizens regard the contamination of ground water as a nuisance, rather than a health hazard.

- **Follow-up with community after site work**: Over the past 5 years, technical teams from EPA, DEP, the District Health Department, and Eastern Manufacturing have been in the area to sample monitoring wells and private wells and fence the site. Some residents complained that there was no adequate follow-up to these visits, or explanation as to what had been the purpose or results of testing. Owners of private wells that were sampled did receive copies of laboratory slips listing the levels of various contaminants. However, they were not familiar with the types of contaminants being tested, nor did they understand how to interpret the levels detected. Local officials were also irritated that they had not been informed of the results of sampling activities.

- **Financing and conducting remedial work**: At least one local official and one resident wondered how the investigation and possible cleanup of Sludge Pond would be financed. The official's concern was that the township could not afford remedial action at the site; at the same time, he did not consider it fair that Eastern Manufacturing, as a potentially responsible party, might be liable for remedial costs since the company had not created Sludge Pond. In general, community members do not appear to be knowledgeable about the Superfund remedial or enforcement process, or its technical and legal requirements. For example, one elected official who had witnessed a technical crew on site found it difficult to understand why sampling had to be delayed until EPA-approved bottles were obtained. He was also somewhat impatient that EPA would be starting an RI of the site, when it had already been investigated a number of times.

D. HIGHLIGHTS

The community relations program at the Sludge Pond site should be designed to allow the community to learn about and participate in the Superfund remedial process, without disrupting the community's confidence that the site poses no new or immediate hazards. To be effective, the community relations program must be gauged according to the community's need for information, and its interest and willingness to participate in the remedial process.

The community relations program at the Sludge Pond site should take the following approaches:

1. Enlist the support and participation of local officials in coordinating community relations activities. Appropriate officials to involve in a community relations program include the Town First Selectman; the County Commissioner for Litchfield, and District Health Department officials. These officials are visible and trusted leaders in the community, and are therefore a valuable resource in EPA's effort to understand and monitor community concern. To gain the support of local officials, inform them regularly and fully of site activities, plans, findings, and developments.

2. Provide follow-up explanations about sampling and test results to area residents. Concise and easily-understood information should be available to all residents on the schedule of technical activities, their purpose, and their outcome. Where information cannot be released to the public -- either because of quality assurance requirements or the sensitivity of enforcement proceedings -- explain clearly and simply why the information must be withheld. Community relations staff should also, however, attempt to identify special situations or concerns where more specialized information may be required, or where certain types of information are needed by single individuals or groups. In particular, owners of property where samples are taken should receive follow-up explanations of what was done and found on their land. Finally, to ensure that inquiries from the community are handled efficiently and consistently, a single EPA contact should be established for the site.

3. Educate area residents and local officials about the procedures, policies, and requirements of the Superfund program. To dispel some of the current confusion about EPA's purpose and responsibilities at the site, make an effort to circulate basic information to the community describing the Superfund process. Questions asked by community members during on-site discussions indicate that the following areas could receive special emphasis: scoring and ranking of NPL sites, the schedule and stages of an RI/FS, and the criteria used to select a cleanup alternative.

4. Let the people "set the pace" for the community relations program. Be aware that federal involvement in local issues is not always well-regarded by townspeople. Federal, and even State, programs are seen as excessively bureaucratic and insensitive to the realities of local government budgets and planning. Therefore, do not "overdo" or overplan community relations

activities in a way that might discourage community participation. Large, formal meetings will almost certainly be inappropriate for this community, as will activities that are planned without consulting key local officials.

5. TECHNIQUES AND TIMING

The following activities are required for the Sludge Pond site community relations program. Exhibit 3 illustrates the timing of each activity during the remedial schedule for the site.

1. A public comment period on the draft FS report. A minimum 3-week public comment period must be held to allow citizens to express their opinions on EPA's preferred alternative for remedial action at Sludge Pond. Community input should be encouraged at this point by informing citizens that EPA will consider their opinions in the ultimate decision on remedial design and remedial action.

2. Preparation of responsiveness summary. This document is required as part of the record of decision (ROD) for the site. It should summarize public concerns and issues raised during the public comment period on the draft FS. In addition, the responsiveness summary documents responses made by EPA and the State to these concerns.

3. Revision of Community Relations Plan. Once the ROD has been issued for Sludge Pond, this community relations plan should be revised to outline community relations activities appropriate to the remedial design and remedial action (RD/RA) phase. The revision of the community relations plan should:

- Update facts and verify the information in this community relations plan prepared for the RI/FS.
- Assess the community relations program to date and indicate if the same or different approaches will be taken during RD/RA.
- Develop a strategy for preparing the community for a future role during RD/RA and ongoing operation and maintenance.

Community interviews should be held before the Sludge Pond community relations plan is revised.

In addition to these basic requirements for a community relations program at Sludge Pond, a number of activities will be undertaken to ensure that the community is well informed about site activities and has the opportunity to express its concerns. Activities, and their approximate timing, are as follows:

1. Establish and maintain information repositories: Fact sheets, technical summaries, site reports (including the community relations plan), and information on the Superfund program will be placed in the information

repositories. An information respository will be located at the Woodbury Public Library.

2. Establish an information contact: A technical or community relations staff person will be designated to respond directly to public inquiries regarding site activities. In contacts with the press, this person should coordinate with EPA Community Relations staff and the DEP Community Involvement staff.

3. Meet with local officials and telephone them periodically: The County Commissioner and the town's First Selectman have indicated that they want to be informed about site plans and findings. Meetings with local officials should include both EPA and DEP officials and should be held at the following technical milestones:

- Completion of the final work plan;
- Completion of the draft RI/FS report; and
- Before remedial action starts.

4. Conduct informal meetings with residents: A meeting with residents is advisable prior to the RI, and before any on-site activities involving use of earth-moving devices or other heavy machinery. The meeting should include interested citizens, the EPA Remedial Project Manager, the DEP Community Involvement Coordinator, and REM II technical and community relations contractor assistance as necessary.

5. Prepare fact sheets and technical summaries: One fact sheet might be released at the beginning of the RI to inform area residents and other interested citizens about EPA's site plans and the procedures of the Superfund program. Another fact sheet (including a technical summary) might be prepared to explain the findings of the RI and to outline each of the remedial alternatives considered for the Sludge Pond site. A detailed description of EPA's preferred remedial alternative(s) should also be provided. In addition, each fact sheet should list the location of information repositories where information is available for public review.

6. Provide news releases to local media: Prepared statements might be released to local papers, such as the Litchfield County Herald and the Waterbury Republication, and to local radio and television stations to announce discovery of any significant findings at the site during the RI/FS, or to notify the community of any public meetings. Additional news releases are advisable at the following milestones:

- When the draft FS report is completed; and
- Before remedial action starts.

Addresses and phone numbers of local newspapers are included in Appendix A.

7. Hold public meeting: A public meeting held during the public comment period would provide an opportunity for EPA to answer questions directly and to discuss the recommended remedial alternative. According to community residents, as few as 20 or as many as 200 community residents might attend

such a meeting. Planning should therefore be flexible. This meeting might be held in the auditorium of one of Woodbury's public schools (Elementary, Middle or High School.) The meeting should be coordinated with the Woodbury and Watertown Township Officers.

EXHIBIT 3

TIMING

Community Relations Technique	Completion of the Work Plan	During RI	Completion or RI	During FS	Completion of Draft FS	Completion of Final FS Report	Start of Remedial Action
1) Information Repository	X ----------	----------	----------	update as needed	----------	----------	---------- X
2) Naming of Information Contact	X ----------	----------	----------	update as needed	----------	----------	---------- X
3) Meetings w/ Local Officials	X				X		X
4) Telephone Contact w/ Local Officials	X ----------	----------	----------	provide as needed	----------	----------	---------- X
5) Informal Discussion w/ Residents		X					
6) Fact Sheets/Technical Summaries		X	X		X		
7) News Releases	X ----------	----------	provide as needed	---------- X	X		X
8) 3-Week Public Comment Period					X----------	----------X	
9) Public Meeting						X	
10) Responsiveness Summary						X	
11) Revision of CRP						X	

ATTACHMENT

LIST OF CONTACTS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

A. Federal Elected Officials

(names and addresses) (phone)

B. State Elected Officials

(names and addresses) (phone)

C. Local Officials

(names and addresses) (phone)

D. U.S. EPA Region I Officials

(names and addresses) (phone)

E. State and Local Agencies

(names and addresses) (phone)

F. Community Organizations, Environmental Groups, and Citizens' Groups*

(names and addresses) (phone)

G. Media

(name and address) (phone)

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*Names and addresses of private citizens should not appear in the community relations plan that is released to the public. These names should, however, be placed on a mailing list that is compiled for the site. To protect the privacy of individuals, this mailing list is compiled for the sole use of the lead agency.

ATTACHMENT

LOCATIONS FOR INFORMATION REPOSITORY AND PUBLIC MEETING

Information Repository:

Woodbury Public Library (203) 246-4567
202 W. State Street
Woodbury, Connecticut 06798

Hours: Mon-Fri 9 am-9 pm
Sat 9 am-5 pm
Sun 12 noon-5 pm

Meeting:

Woodbury Public Schools (203) 246-1234
Elementary School
231 Chapel Street
Woodbury, Connecticut 06798

Middle School (203) 246-2468
105 E. Main Street
Woodbury, Connecticut 06798

High School (203) 246-1359
414 W. Main Street
Woodbury, Connecticut 06798

Woodbury Township Office (203) 246-4568
(basement of Woodbury Public Library)
202 W. State Street
Woodbury, Connecticut 06798

APPENDIX C

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR AND SAMPLE RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY

I. SUGGESTED FORMAT

1. Overview

Purpose: Briefly state public reaction to the agency's preferred alternative.

Length: One to two paragraphs.

2. Background on Community Involvement

Purpose: Briefly summarize major community concerns identified as part of the community relations plan and during the RI/FS, and identify how the agency addressed these concerns.

Length: Two to three pages.

3. Summary of Public Comments and Agency Responses

Purpose: Summarize the comments received by the agency during the public comment period on the RI/FS and proposed plan. Include written and oral comments from individual citizens, citizen groups, local officials, and PRPs. Group comments into appropriate topics, such as public preferences for remedial action and public comments on enforcement action.

Length: Varies with the number and types of comments received.

4. Remaining Concerns

Purpose: Identify any public concerns that the agency did not address directly during the RI/FS, and how it proposes to handle these concerns during remedial design and remedial action.

Length: One to two pages.

Attachment

List of community relations activities conducted at the site before and during the public comment period.

II. SAMPLE RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY

The following responsiveness summary for the Mitchell Dump in Annapolis, Maryland site is intended to illustrate the suggested format and content of responsiveness summaries. This example was based on an actual responsiveness summary prepared for a Superfund remedial site. Names, locations, and some technical details have been changed so that this responsiveness summary should be viewed as an illustration only.

* * * * * *

MITCHELL DUMP, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND
RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY

A. OVERVIEW

At the time of the public comment period, EPA had already selected a preferred alternative for the Mitchell Dump in Annapolis, Maryland. EPA's recommended alternative addressed the soil and ground-water contamination problems at the site. The preferred alternative specified in the record of decision (ROD) involved aeration to reduce soil contamination, and pumping and treating the contaminated ground water. Treatment of ground water would involve air stripping and carbon filtration. The treated ground water would then be returned to the aquifer.

Judging from the comments received during the public comment period, the residents and town council of Annapolis, and the Maryland Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) would strongly support the pumping and air-stripping alternative for ground-water contamination. The community, in general, preferred soil treatment methods other than aeration (e.g., Citizens for a Safe Environment preferred incineration, local officials preferred capping, and DEP preferred excavation and removal of "hot spots"). The PRPs, however, would not support any alternative that involved pumping and treatment of ground water.

These sections follow:

- Background on Community Involvement.
- Summary of Comments Received during Public Comment Period and Agency Responses.
- Remaining Concerns.
- Attachment: Community Relations Activities at Mitchell Dump.

B. BACKGROUND ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community interest in the Mitchell Dump dates to 1973 when residents of Annapolis reported odors in their well water and discoloration of laundry. Since 1973, community concern and involvement have remained strong. Two women, Jane Bethel and Karen Sweeney, have been particularly vocal in expressing the concerns of the community to the Annapolis Town Council, DEP, and EPA. They have been successful in focusing considerable media attention on the site. The major concerns expressed during the remedial planning activities at the Mitchell Dump focused on possible health effects from the contamination at the site and the apparent delays in getting the site cleaned up. These concerns and how EPA and the State addressed them are described below:

1. Citizens for a Safe Environment and several residents expressed concern that wells not originally included in the State's sampling plan were contaminated.

   EPA Response: EPA agreed to expand the sampling plan to include the wells identified by the residents.

2. At two points during the RI, local officials and a few residents complained that there was not adequate follow-up. Specifically, they complained that sampling results and the status of negotiations with PRPs were not made available.

   EPA Response: Concerning the lack of sampling information, EPA officials telephoned local officials and interested residents to explain the sampling results as they became available.

   EPA was unable to provide the community with information on the status of PRP negotiations since this information is considered confidential. EPA did acknowledge that PRP negotiations were underway.

3. Citizens for a Safe Environment expressed a great deal of concern about health effects from the site shortly after the ground-water contamination was first discovered.

   EPA Response: To provide the community with accurate, up-to-date information on possible health effects from the Mitchell Dump, EPA prepared and distributed a fact sheet.

4. One of the major concerns expressed by local officials and residents regarded the perceived delays in the cleanup schedule.

   EPA Response: EPA distributed a generic information pamphlet describing the remedial process and the time required for remedial activities.

C. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Comments raised during the Mitchell Dump public comment period on the draft FS and proposed plan are summarized briefly below. The comment period was held from February 27 to April 6, 1987. The comments are categorized by relevant topics.

Remedial Alternative Preferences

Each of the major commentors on the draft FS expressed a preference for specific alternatives:

1. DEP recommended controlling the source of contamination, possibly by on-site aeration if first tested on a small scale. DEP also recommended that EPA excavate the top few feet of soil in the "hot spots" and dispose of soil off-site. DEP supports ground-water pumping and treatment, but disagrees with EPA proposals. DEP suggests that ground water be treated at the point of discharge rather that at the point of origin.

   EPA Response: After considering the tradeoffs between the solutions, EPA decided on the on-site remedial action described in the Record of Decision (ROD). This remedial action will involve soil aeration on-site, covering the site with a synthetic cap, and pumping and air-stripping/carbon filtration of ground water. For a further explanation of the process for selecting the remedial alternative, refer to the ROD. The ROD considers both the on-site aeration alternative and treatment of ground water at the point of discharge, and documents EPA's choice of cleanup method.

2. Citizens for a Safe Environment (speaking for a number of citizens at the public hearing) recommended that ground water be pumped and treated; however, they also expressed concern as to whether air-stripping would remove heavy metals. The Citizens for a Safe Environment and State Representative Bob Carter preferred source control by incineration rather than soil aeration or capping the site.

   EPA Response: EPA seriously considered the preference of local residents for pumping and treatment of ground water and eventually selected it as the preferred alternative. EPA selected aeration over incineration because of the potential air pollution from incineration. Air-stripping is an effective treatment for volatile organics, but not for heavy metals. To date, heavy-metal contamination in off-site ground water has not been identified as an environmental or public health concern. If this situation changes, the proposed treatment system will be modified to ensure that levels of heavy metals in the treated water will not adversely affect public health or environment.

3. The Annapolis Town Council agreed that ground-water extraction and treatment were critical. The town council was, however, split on

capping versus incineration. The council preferred a clay cap rather than a synthetic cap. The council opposed on-site aeration. Other local officials, including the Annapolis Planning Board and the Mitchell Dumping Site Evaluation Committee, endorsed capping as the preferred method of source control.

EPA Response: EPA appreciates the efforts made to consider seriously the tradeoffs involved in the source control options. EPA has considered the advantages, disadvantages, and uncertainties associated with each alternative considered in the FS. After considering the effectiveness and cost of each alternative, EPA decided on the aeration and air-stripping/carbon filtration alternative described in the ROD. For a further explanation of the process for selecting the remedial alternative, refer to the ROD.

4. All PRPs and their representatives recommended that the source of contamination be controlled and that the ground water be allowed to cleanse itself naturally. They opposed pumping and treating ground water due to possible technical problems and questioned the cost-effectiveness, since the water is not presently used to supply drinking water.

   EPA Response: As EPA explained to the PRPs, EPA's policy is that applicable and relevant Federal laws be applied to Superfund remedies to ensure adequate protection of public health, welfare, and the environment. In this case, EPA applied Federal standards from the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) to reach the decision to pump and treat off-site contaminated ground water by the air-stripping and carbon filtration methods. This cleanup will be accomplished to levels adequate to protect human health based on drinking water standards.

Technical Questions/Concerns Regarding Remedial Alternatives

1. DEP recommended that air monitoring be developed before any on-site work that may result in emissions to the atmosphere.

   EPA Response: Air quality will be monitored both on and off the site during the soil aeration. If monitoring reveals air releases in excess of EPA standards, aeration will be halted and one of the other remedial alternatives will be substituted.

2. Citizens for a Safe Environment questioned the adequacy of the RI/FS in explaining the effects of seasonal variation in the level and movement of ground water. The group questioned whether testing done in March was representative of the entire year.

   EPA Response: The RI/FS provides sufficient information, including information on depth of ground water, to make a decision on a site remedy without further delays associated with additional studies.

3. Most of the PRPs and several individuals questioned the effectiveness and technical feasibility of the pumping/treating alternative for ground water.

EPA Response: EPA considered state-of-the-art ground-water restoration techniques in the RI/FS. Field tests during the pre-design stage will be conducted to ensure that pumping/treating is effective.

4. PRPs expressed concern that because the pumping alternative necessitated construction on the site, an unattended structure would be left on the site for many years and would attract vandals.

EPA Response: The treatment facility for the Mitchell Dump will be designed to minimize the potential for vandalism.

5. Citizens for a Safe Environment and a local union leader expressed concern that soil aeration may pose unacceptable risk to workers and community, including children wandering onto the site.

EPA Response: Soil aeration will be completed as efficiently as possible, but in accordance with a procedure which will not allow airborne contaminants to exceed the safe limits established by EPA for both workers and the public. EPA will require air monitoring during soil aeration. If this monitoring reveals air releases in excess of EPA standards, aeration will be halted and one of the other remedial alternatives will be substituted. Measures will be taken to prevent unauthorized people from entering the site.

6. DEP, Citizens for a Safe Environment, Representative Carter, and a resident raised concerns regarding the long-term integrity of the cap at the public hearing. They have argued that while a cap provides cover, it does not eliminate contamination and eventually contaminants will emerge. Citizens for a Safe Environment had a number of questions concerning the capping alternative, including: (1) How long will the cap last? (2) Will the cap be affected by chemical vapors from the soil? (3) Will excessive water ponding on top of the cap or running off the sides get into the soil? (4) Will excess water be drained? (5) What effects will thawing have on the cap?

EPA Response: The use of synthetic caps is relatively new (10-15 years old); therefore, predicting its effective life is difficult. Manufacturers of the synthetic cap material claim that it can withstand high concentrations of liquid volatile organics for 50 years or more. The cap at Mitchell will not come into contact with liquids, but will come into contact with lower concentrations of vapors. Therefore, EPA feels that a 50-year life span is realistic. Tests of the cap have shown that the capping material will not be affected by thawing.

As for ponding -- the cap will act as an umbrella over the contaminated soil. The site is naturally graded, so there should be no ponding in the vicinity of the contaminated soils. Water will naturally drain off the site.

8. PRPs questioned the application of RCRA since meeting the RCRA requirements was not a stated objective in the FS.

   EPA Response: To adequately protect public health and the environment, EPA policy is that applicable and relevant Federal laws be applied to Superfund remedies. In the case of the Mitchell Dump, the applicable regulations are those found in RCRA that call for cleaning up off-site contamination caused by the migration of contaminants from a hazardous waste facility.

9. At the public meeting, one resident asked how aeration is to be done.

   EPA Response: As the Agency explained during the meeting, soil would be turned over periodically with a rototiller to encourage evaporation of volatile organics and monitored until levels of contaminants in the soil are below detectable levels.

Public Participation Process

1. There were several complaints that not enough time was allowed between the public meeting on March 17, when RI/FS was explained, and the scheduled close of the public comment period on March 24. (The draft FS was released on February 27). Specifically, the following parties requested to have the public comment period extended: Citizens for a Safe Environment, Annapolis Town Council, residents, PRPs, and Representative Carter.

   EPA Response: The public comment period started with the release of the documents on February 27, 1985. During the comment period, EPA held a meeting on March 17, 1985 to receive any questions on the FS. The comment period initially allowed three weeks for comment, but was extended on two occasions; with the extensions, the comment period ended April 6, 1985.

Costs/Funding Issues

1. Several comments were received from DEP, residents, and Representative Carter expressing concern that operation and maintenance (O&M) costs could place a large burden on the State and therefore the taxpayers. DEP was particularly concerned that O&M costs would be an excessive burden on the State. Citizens for a Safe Environment and citizens suggested that PRPs should pay for O&M.

   EPA Response: The Superfund law stipulates that, whenever possible, PRPs pay for remedial actions at a Superfund site. PRPs can conduct the remedial action or EPA can take action following the cleanup to recover monies for Superfund.

EPA will try to ensure that PRPs pay the costs of cleanup and the O&M costs. In addition, further efforts will be made to minimize the State's O&M costs without jeopardizing the effectiveness of the remedial action.

2. Residents and Representative Carter stated that cost should not be a criterion in deciding how to clean up a site.

   EPA Response: The National Contingency Plan (NCP) specifies the decision process for remedial actions at Superfund sites. EPA does not compromise on the effectiveness of an alternative to meet the cost-effectiveness criterion. However, among those alternatives considered effective, EPA selects the least costly. This preserves monies for other Superfund sites.

3. Representative Carter and the Citizens for a Safe Environment stated that since the FY 1985 final Superfund Comprehensive Accomplishments Plan (SCAP) allocated $5 million for cleanup of the Mitchell Dump, EPA should not be constrained by costs in selecting alternatives.

   EPA Response: The $5 million listed in the SCAP was an estimate made in advance of the FS for budgeting purposes nationwide. It is a gross estimate made before the appropriate actions could be determined. The cost effective criterion in the NCP has been used in making the decision for the Mitchell Dump. EPA believes this is a more appropriate criterion than merely using an average figure regardless of the circumstances pertaining to the site.

4. One resident questioned who would pay for the cleanup.

   EPA Response: The remedial action at the site, if done by the government, would use 90% Superfund money and 10% State funds. The O&M costs, in this case, would have to be borne by the State. The other option that exists at any Superfund site is that PRPs with liabilities associated with the site may agree to come forth and do the cleanup. They may agree to come forth and pay in advance for the cleanup, or they may decline, in which case the government would pay and then seek to recover the costs in court after the cleanup.

Enforcement

1. PRPs questioned why EPA had not pursued other users of the Mitchell Dump.

   EPA Response: The question relates to EPA enforcement actions against PRPs parties at the Mitchell Dump. The purpose of this responsivness summary is not to comment on EPA enforcement strategy, but rather to respond to comments on the RI/FS and its recommendations.

Decision Process

1. During the public hearing, a reporter with the Annapolis Journal asked who decides how to clean up the site - EPA? DEP? EPA and DEP in conjunction?

   EPA Response: Under the Superfund law, EPA must make the decision in consultation with the State. The law, however, also states that before EPA can spend that money for the remedial action, EPA must have a contract with the State assuring that it will pay 10% of the cost and will assure O&M of the site. In effect, that gives the State a veto, since it could refuse to sign a contract for cost-sharing.

D. REMAINING CONCERNS

Issues and concerns that EPA was unable to address during remedial planning activities include the following:

- How much of the cleanup will be paid by PRPs? EPA was unable to address this since negotiations are still unresolved.
- Will the pumping/treating alternative be 100% effective? EPA was unable to address this concern because this information will not be available until details of the remedial design are established. EPA will release this information as soon as it is available.

The Citizens for a Safe Environment specifically requested an opportunity to review and comment on the draft remedial design study before it is approved by EPA. In response, EPA will hold a 30-day comment period and public meeting after the workplan for remedial design is complete to allow the public to question EPA, DEP, and contractor staff.

ATTACHMENT

COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTIVITIES AT MITCHELL DUMP

Community relations activities conducted at the Mitchell Dump to date have included:

- DEP conducted community interviews with local officials and interested residents (April 1983).
- DEP prepared community relations plan (May 1983).
- DEP issued a press release announcing finalization of cooperative agreement (June 1983).
- EPA established an information repository at the Annapolis Library (June 1983).
- EPA prepared and distributed fact sheet on health-effects of site contaminants (July 1983).
- DEP and EPA jointly issued two press releases to announce findings of RI (Summer and Fall, 1983).
- DEP frequently telephoned the Annapolis City Council, Mayor and the press (ongoing throughout RI/FS).
- EPA released the FS for public review and comment (February 1985).
- EPA held a public meeting at Stephenson Hall in Annapolis to describe the RI/FS reports and to respond to citizens' questions. Approximately 60 people attended, including citizens, elected officials, and technical and legal representatives of the PRPs (March 17, 1985). A transcript of this meeting is available at the Annapolis Public Library.
- EPA held a public hearing at Stephenson Hall in Annapolis to record comments by the public, including potentially responsible parties (March 24, 1985). A transcript of this hearing is available at the Annapolis Public Library.
- EPA allowed two extensions to the public comment period. The comment period lasted from February 27 to April 6, 1985.

APPENDIX D

GLOSSARY

This glossary defines terms often used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff when describing activities under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, commonly called Superfund), as amended in 1986. The definitions apply specifically to the Superfund program and may have other meanings when used in different circumstances. Underlined words included in various definitions are defined separately in the glossary.

Administrative Order on Consent (AOC): A legal agreement between EPA and potentially responsible parties (PRPs) whereby PRPs agree to perform or pay the cost of a site cleanup. The agreement describes actions to be taken at a site and may be subject to a public comment period. Unlike a consent decree, an administrative order on consent does not have to be approved by a judge.

Administrative Record: A file which is maintained and contains all information used by the lead agency to make its decision on the selection of a response action under CERCLA. This file is to be available for public review and a copy is to be established at or near the site, usually at one of the information repositories. Also, a duplicate file is held in a central location, such as a Regional or State office.

Air Stripping: A treatment system that removes, or "strips," volatile organic compounds from contaminated ground water or surface water by forcing an airstream through the water and causing the compounds to evaporate.

Aquifer: An underground rock formation composed of materials such as sand, soil, or gravel that can store and supply ground water to wells and springs. Most aquifers used in the United States are within a thousand feet of the earth's surface.

Carcinogen: A substance that causes cancer.

Carbon Adsorption: A treatment system where contaminants are removed from ground water or surface water when the water is forced through tanks containing activated carbon, a specially treated material that attracts the contaminants.

Cleanup: Actions taken to deal with a release or threatened release of hazardous substances that could affect public health and/or the environment. The term "cleanup" is often used broadly to describe various response actions or phases of remedial responses such as the remedial investigation/ feasibility study.

Comment Period: A time period during which the public can review and comment on various documents and EPA actions. For example, a comment period is provided when EPA proposes to add sites to the National Priorities List. Also, a minimum 3-week comment period is held to allow community members to review and comment on a draft RI/FS and proposed plan.

Community Relations (CR): EPA's program to inform and involve the public in the Superfund process and respond to community concerns.

Community Relations Plan (CRP): Formal Plan for EPA community relations activities at a Superfund site.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA): A federal law passed in 1980 and modified in 1986 by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act. The Acts created a special tax that goes into a Trust Fund, commonly known as Superfund, to investigate and clean up abandoned or uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. Under the program, EPA can either:

- Pay for site cleanup when parties responsible for the contamination cannot be located or are unwilling or unable to perform the work; or
- Take legal action to force parties responsible for site contamination to clean up the site or pay back the Federal government for the cost of the cleanup.

Consent Decree (CD): A legal document, approved and issued by a judge, that formalizes an agreement reached between EPA and potentially responsible parties (PRPs) where PRPs will perform all or part of a Superfund site cleanup. The consent decree describes actions that PRPs are required to perform and is subject to a public comment period.

Contract Lab Program: Laboratories under contract to EPA which analyze soil, water, and waste samples taken from areas at or near Superfund sites.

Cost-Effective Alternative: The cleanup alternative selected for a site on the National Priorities List based on technical feasibility, permanence, reliability, and cost. The selected alternative does not require EPA to choose the least expensive alternative. It requires that if there are several cleanup alternatives available that deal effectively with the problems at a site, EPA must choose the remedy on the basis of permanence, reliability, and cost.

Cost Recovery: A legal process where potentially responsible parties can be required to pay back the Federal government for money it spends on any cleanup actions.

Emergency: Those releases or threats of releases requiring initiation of on-site activity within hours of the lead agency's determination that a removal action is appropriate.

Enforcement: EPA's efforts, through legal action if necessary, to force potentially responsible parties to perform or pay for a Superfund site cleanup.

Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA): An analysis of removal alternatives for a site, similar to a remedial program feasibility study. The EE/CA must be made available for a 30 calendar day public comment period prior to the signing off of the Action Memorandum.

Environmental Response Team (ERT): EPA hazardous waste experts who provide 24-hour technical assistance to EPA Regional Offices and States during all types of emergencies involving releases at hazardous waste sites and spills of hazardous substances.

Explanation of Differences: After adoption of a final remedial action plan, if any remedial action is taken, or any enforcement action under Section 106 is taken, or if any settlement or consent decree under Sections 106 or 122 is entered into, and if such action, settlement, or decree differs in any significant respects from the final plan, the lead agency is required to publish an explanation of the significant differences and the reasons the changes were made. See Guidance on Preparing Superfund Decision Documents: the Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for further information.

Feasibility Study (FS): See Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study.

Ground Water: Water found beneath the earth's surface that fills pores between materials such as sand, soil, or gravel. In aquifers, ground water occurs in sufficient quantities that it can be used for drinking water, irrigation and other purposes.

Hazard Ranking System (HRS): A scoring system used to evaluate potential relative risks to public health and the environment from releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances. EPA and States use the HRS to calculate a site score, from 0 to 100, based on the actual or potential release of hazardous substances from a site through air, surface water, or ground water to affect people. This score is the primary factor used to decide if a hazardous waste site should be placed on the National Priorities List.

Hazardous Substance: Any material that poses a threat to public health and/or the environment. Typical hazardous substances are materials that are toxic, corrosive, ignitable, explosive, or chemically reactive.

Hydrology: The science dealing with the properties, movement, and effects of water on the earth's surface, in the soil and rocks below, and in the atmopshere.

Incineration: Burning of certain types of solid, liquid, or gaseous materials under controlled conditions to destroy hazardous waste.

Information Repository: A file containing current information, technical reports, and reference documents regarding a Superfund site. The information repository is usually located in a public building that is convenient for local residents -- such as a public school, city hall, or library.

Leachate: A contaminated liquid resulting when water percolates, or trickles, through waste materials and collects components of those wastes. Leaching may occur at landfills and may result in hazardous substances entering soil, surface water, or ground water.

Monitoring Wells: Special wells drilled at specific locations on or off a hazardous waste site where ground water can be sampled at selected depths and studied to determine such things as the direction in which ground water flows and the types and amounts of contaminants present.

National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP): The Federal regulation that guides the Superfund program.

National Priorities List (NPL): EPA's list of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites identified for possible long-term remedial response using money from the Trust Fund. The list is based primarily on the score a site receives on the Hazard Ranking System (HRS). EPA is required to update the NPL at least once a year.

National Response Center (NRC): The center operated by the U.S. Coast Guard that receives and evaluates reports of oil and hazardous substance releases into the environment and notifies the appropriate agency(ies). The NRC can be contacted 24-hours a day, toll-free at (800) 424-8802.

National Response Team (NRT): Representatives of twelve Federal agencies that coordinate Federal responses to nationally significant pollution incidents and provide advice and technical assistance to the responding agency(ies).

Non-Time-Critical Removals: Those releases or threats of releases not requiring initiation of on-site activity within 6 months after the lead agency's determination, based on the site evaluation, that a removal action is appropriate.

On-Scene Coordinator: The Federal official who coordinates and directs Superfund removal actions.

Operable Unit: An action taken as one part of an overall site cleanup. For example, a carbon absorbtion system could be installed to halt rapidly spreading ground-water contaminants while a more comprehensive and long-term remedial investigation/feasibility study is underway. A number of operable units can be used in the course of a site cleanup.

Operation and Maintenance (O&M): Activities conducted at a site after a response action occurs, to ensure that the cleanup or containment system is functioning properly.

Parts Per Billion (ppb)/Parts per Million (ppm): Units commonly used to express low concentrations of contaminants. For example, 1 ounce of trichloroethylene (TCE) in 1 million ounces of water is 1 ppm; 1 ounce of TCE in 1 billion ounces of water is 1 ppb. If one drop of TCE is mixed in a competition-size swimming pool, the water will contain about 1 ppb of TCE.

Potentially Responsible Party (PRP): An individual(s) or company(ies) (such as owners, operators, transporters, or generators) potentially responsible for, or contributing to, the contamination problems at a Superfund site. Whenever possible, EPA requires PRPs, through administrative and legal actions, to clean up hazardous waste sites they have contaminated.

Preliminary Assessment: The process of collecting and reviewing available information about a known or suspected hazardous waste site or release. EPA or States use this information to determine if the site requires further study. If further study is needed, a site inspection is undertaken.

Proposed Plan: A public participation requirement of SARA in which EPA summarizes for the public the preferred cleanup strategy, the rationale for the preference, reviews the alternatives presented in the detailed analysis of the remedial investigation/feasibility study, and presents any waivers to cleanup standards of §121(d)(4) which may be proposed. This may be prepared either as a fact sheet or as a separate document. In either case, it must actively solicit public review and comment on all alternatives under Agency consideration.

Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC): A system of procedures, checks, audits, and corrective actions used to ensure that field work and laboratory analysis during the investigation and cleanup of Superfund sites meet established standards.

Record of Communication: A register of all verbal communications between EPA and citizens regarding site concerns.

Record of Decision (ROD): A public document that explains which cleanup alternative(s) will be used at National Priorities List sites. The record of decision is based on information and technical analysis generated during the remedial investigation/feasibility study and consideration of public comments and community concerns.

Regional Response Team (RRT): Representatives of Federal, State, and local agencies who may assist in coordination of activities at the request of the On-Scene Coordinator or Remedial Project Manager before and during response actions.

Remedial Action (RA): The actual construction or implementation phase that follows the remedial design of the selected cleanup alternative at a site on the National Priorities List.

Remedial Design (RD): An engineering phase that follows the record of decision when technical drawings and specifications are developed for the subsequent remedial action at a site on the National Priorities List.

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study: Investigative and analytical studies usually performed at the same time in an interactive, iterative process, and together referred to as the "RI/FS." They are intended to:

- Gather the data necessary to determine the type and extent of contamination at a Superfund site;
- Establish criteria for cleaning up the site;
- Identify and screen cleanup alternatives for remedial action; and
- Analyze in detail the technology and costs of the alternatives.

Remedial Project Manager (RPM): The EPA or State official responsible for overseeing remedial response activities.

Remedial Response: A long-term action that stops or substantially reduces a release or threatened release of hazardous substances that is serious, but does not pose an immediate threat to public health and/or the environment.

Removal Action: An immediate action taken over the short-term to address a release or threatened release of hazardous substances.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA): A Federal law that established a regulatory system to track hazardous substances from the time of generation to disposal. The law requires safe and secure procedures to be used in treating, transporting, storing, and disposing of hazardous substances. RCRA is designed to prevent new, uncontrolled hazardous waste sites.

Response Action: A CERCLA-authorized action at a Superfund site involving either a short-term removal action or a long-term remedial response that may include, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- Removing hazardous materials from a site to an EPA-approved, licensed hazardous waste facility for treatment, containment, or destruction.
- Containing the waste safely on-site to eliminate further problems.
- Destroying or treating the waste on-site using incineration or other technologies.
- Identifying and removing the source of ground water contamination and halting further movement of the contaminants.

Responsiveness Summary: A summary of oral and/or written public comments received by EPA during a comment period on key EPA documents, and EPA's responses to those comments. The responsiveness summary is a key part of the ROD, highlighting community concerns for EPA decision-makers.

Site Inspection (SI): A technical phase that follows a preliminary assessment designed to collect more extensive information on a hazardous waste site. The information is used to score the site with the Hazard Ranking System to determine whether response action is needed.

Superfund: The common name used for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, also referred to as the Trust Fund.

Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA): Modifications to CERCLA enacted on October 17, 1986.

Surface Water: Bodies of water that are above ground, such as rivers, lakes, and streams.

Time Critical Removals: Including emergencies lasting longer than 30 calendar days, those releases requiring initiation of on-site activity within 6 months of the lead agency's determination, based on the site evaluation that a removal action is appropriate.

Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facility (TSD Facility): Any building, structure, or installation where a hazardous substance has been treated, stored, or disposed. TSD facilities are regulated by EPA and States under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Trust Fund: A Fund set up under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act to help pay for cleanup of hazardous waste sites and to take legal action to force those responsible for the sites to clean them up.

Volatile Organic Compound: An organic (carbon-containing) compound that evaporates (volatizes) readily at room temperature.

Water Purveyor: A public utility mutual water company, county water district, or municipality that delivers drinking water to customers.

SUPERFUND ACRONYMS

AOC -- Administrative Order on Consent

ARARs -- Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements

ATSDR -- Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry

CD -- Consent Decree

CERCLA -- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980

COE -- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

CR -- Community Relations

CRP -- Community Relations Plan

DOC -- Department of Commerce

DOD -- Department of Defense

DOE -- Department of Energy

DOI -- Department of Interior

ERA -- Expedited Removal Actions

ERT -- Environmental Response Team

FEMA -- Federal Emergency Management Agency

FS -- Feasibility Study

HHS -- Department of Health and Human Services

HRS -- Hazard Ranking System

IAGs -- Interagency Agreements

NCP -- National Oil and Hazardous Substances Contingency Plan

NOAA -- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NPL -- National Priorities List

NRC -- National Response Center

NRT -- National Response Team

OSC -- On-Scene Coordinator

O&M -- Operation and Maintenance

ppm/ppb -- parts per million/parts per billion

PRP -- Potentially Responsible Party

PA -- Preliminary Assessment

QA/QC -- Quality Assurance/Quality Control

ROD -- Record of Decision

RRT -- Regional Response Team

RA -- Remedial Action

RD -- Remedial Design

RI -- Remedial Investigation

RPM -- Remedial Project Manager

RCRA -- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976

SI -- Site Inspection

SARA -- Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986

SMOAs -- State Memorandum of Agreements

TSD -- Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facility

USCG -- United States Coast Guard

VOC -- Volatile Organic Compound

APPENDIX E

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APPENDIX F

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APPENDIX G

PROPOSED COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD REQUIREMENTS FOR REMOVALS

	TYPE OF REMOVAL			
ACTIVITY	**EMERGENCY**[1] Where onsite activity lasts less than 30 days	**TIME CRITICAL**[2] Where onsite activity lasts less than 120 days	**TIME CRITICAL**[2] Where onsite activity lasts more than 120 days	**NON-TIME CRITICAL**[3]
Designate spokesperson	X	X	X	X
Notify affected citizens	X	X	X	X
Establish Administrative Record (AR) file	X	X	X	X
Make AR available when EE/CA approval memorandum is signed				X
Make AR available within 60 days of initiation of site activity	X	X	X	
Place AR in central location	X	X	X	X
Place AR at or near facility		X	X	X
Notify public of AR	X	X	X	X
Provide a 30 day comment period from date EE/CA is completed				X
Provide a 30 day comment period from date AR is available		X	X	
Prepare Responsiveness Summary		X	X	X
Conduct community interviews			X	X
Prepare Community Relations Plan			X	X

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[1] Those releases or threats of releases requiring that cleanup activities begin onsite within hours of the lead agency's determination that a removal action is appropriate.

[2] Including emergencies lasting longer than 30 days, those releases requiring that cleanup activities begin onsite within 6 months of the lead agency's determination, based on the site evaluation, that a removal action is appropriate.

[3] Those releases or threats of releases not requiring that cleanup activities begin onsite within 6 months after the lead agency's determination, based on the site evaluation, that a removal action is appropriate.

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